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A

VIEW

OF

ANTIENT HISTORY;

INCLUDING THE PROGRESS OF

LITERATURE

AND THE

FINE ARTS.

BY

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A VIEW

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OF

ANTIENT HISTORY.

INTRODUCTION.

UNIVERSAL history coincides with the sacred records in ascribing a recent origin to the human race. If, from physical observations on the phenomena of the earth, the philosopher be led to refer its original creation to a high antiquity, from similar observations he regards it in its present form, as rising from the ruins of a former structure, by one of those revolutions which are incident to the globe, as well as its inhabitants. These conclusions, which the philosopher draws from the appearances of nature, are confirmed by the researches of the historian, who discerns unequivocal marks of the infancy of mankind in every part of the world. No written records ascend beyond the period of four thousand years; no monuments appear on the surface, or are discovered in the bowels of the earth, of nations, with whose history we are not in some degree acquainted; no remains of art are now apparent, by which the human hand can be recognized, anterior to the page of history, or the tales of tradition.

We are assured, from the certain evidence of sacred history, that, above 4000 years ago, a con-

vulsion of the elements took place, and the world assumed a new form. The memorials of that general deluge, which changed the globe, and destroyed its inhabitants, are transmitted by universal tradition, and recorded on the face of nature.

The surviving remnants of the old world, whose piety preserved them in the general wreck, are the second ancestors of the human race. The preternatural longevity which they enjoyed, was favourable to the multiplication of their descendants, and the gradual population of the earth. From those countries in Asia, where the family of Noah, the father of the new world, settled or wandered after the flood, we can trace the migrations of the first men towards the western hemisphere. In proportion to their distance from their native region, we find the nations more or less civilized; the course of improvement has run from east to west. Asia Minor, Greece, Italy, Gaul, Britain, which one after another were enlightened and refined, derived their knowledge and their refinement from an intercourse more immediate or remote with that part of the world which retained some portion of civility and the arts; whilst the rest of mankind degenerated into barbarians and savages.

In the first ages after the flood, the pastoral life, which had been adopted by the patriarchs, was the occupation of men. The bonds of propinquity, and the terror of wild beasts, would keep them united, while their numbers were inconsiderable. But at a period when the life of man extended to three centuries, and in fertile regions as yet but thinly inhabited, the growth of population would be prodigious. In the pastoral state, men are accustomed to migrate from place to place with their families and their flocks; a large extent of territory is requisite for the subsistence of a small tribe; frequent quarrels would arise

arise among rival fraternities, similar to those which took place between the herdsmen of Abraham and the herdsmen of Lot; accordingly they would be disposed to recede from one another, and gradually compelled to spread themselves over the earth. All history abounds with proofs, that such a migrating spirit has operated over the far greater part of the globe; it has never ceased to actuate a large portion of mankind; and still prevails among the Arabians of the desert, and the numberless hordes that wander over the immense continent stretching from the north of European Turkey to the northern frontier of China. In such a situation it required no miracle to disperse men, when it was impossible they could remain united and keep together. The common opinion concerning the confusion of languages at the building of Babel, and the consequent dispersion of mankind, as a judgment from Heaven, is inconsistent with the Mosaic narrative. Long after this period, the same language was spoken in different parts of the world. Abraham, who came from Mesopotamia, sojourned among various nations of Asia, among the descendants of Ham in Egypt, and conversed with them all. And it is evident, from sacred scripture, that after this era, the same language, or different dialects of the same language, prevailed from the gulf of Persia to the Pillars of Hercules, and from the south point of Arabia to the Black-sea.

From the generations of the sons of Noah, recorded in Genesis *, it also appears, that the tribes of men dispersed themselves over the earth, according to the ties of kindred and natural connection; an event which could not have taken place, had they been scattered in a tumultuous manner, and in con-

* Chap. x.

sequence of the Divine vengeance. After enumerating the descendants of Japhet, "By these," says Moses, "were the isles of the Gentiles divided in "their lands, every one after his tongue, after their "families, in their nations." Similar expressions are employed with respect to the posterity of Shem and of Ham. These expressions suppose, that nations were formed according to the natural connections of blood and of language; and, of consequence, that they owed their origin to choice, and not to the accidental concourse of fugitives who were strangers to the language of one another.

As the various tribes separated from the parent stock in the infancy of arts, and before language had become copious or fixed, their future progress is easily explained. Those who settled in the fine climate and fertile region of Asia, would soon naturally be led to unite under a regular form of government, cultivate arts, and improve their language. The hordes who migrated to the mountains, and the dens of Europe, found countries overgrown with wood, and inhabited only by wild beasts. Hunting became their chief resource for subsistence; arms were their first necessaries. Unconnected with the tribes whom they had left behind, subsisting by the chace, and living in a state of war with the beasts of the field, the scanty knowledge of arts which they could boast of, would soon be forgotten, and necessity limit their ideas, and their language, to the narrow p ints of subsistence and security. A tribe of hunters in a savage forest, partake the nature of their associates, the wolf and the lion, and necessarily become ferocious. Accordingly we find traces and vestiges of that primitive condition of our species in the early accounts of Europe, Africa, America, and of every part of the world, except those regions of Asia, whose inhabitants never abandoned their

their original abodes, nor entirely lost the arts and acquisitions of their fathers.

Civilized nations are the subjects of history; and, in proportion as wild and wandering tribes begin to settle in a fixed habitation, to build cities, to form governments, and to institute laws, their annals become interesting, and deserve to be recorded.

Civil history agrees with sacred in representing Asia as the first civilized portion of the world. There Nimrod laid the foundation of the Babylonian, and Assur of the Assyrian empire, in the first ages after the flood. The regions known at present by the name of Persia, must have made early advanc s to civilization; for their sovereign Chedorlaomer, in the days of Abraham, had subjected a great extent of country to his authority. Several states, often mentioned by Moses, were also formed, at that time, in Palestine, and on the banks of Jordan. But little is known concerning these early ages. The sacred books, the only certain sources of information with regard to such remote events, leave us entirely in the dark. The relations of profane historians are obscure, fabulous, and contradictory. In general, it appears, both from sacred and profane history, that Nineveh and Babylon were originally the capitals of two kingdoms, were governed by distinct monarchs, and continued separate 440 years.

Of the sovereigns who reigned at Nineveh from Assur to Ninus, the history is lost: their names are not so much as recorded. The Assyrian empire, so celebrated in history, like other early establishments, was inconsiderable in its commencement. Ninus was the first who attempted to enlarge its boundaries by foreign conquest.*

After Nimrod, seven kings, Chaldeans by birth, reigned successively at Babylon. A family of

princes, originally from Arabia, then seized on the throne. Six of these succeeded each other without interruption. Under the last of these kings, Ninus, the sovereign of Assyria, attacked and defeated the Babylonians, and by that conquest joined the throne of Babylon to that of Nineveh, about 590 years after the flood. From the union of these two nations into one great people, the antient empire of the Assyrians arose; an empire which held Asia in subjection for eight hundred years.

Kings and nations are not the subjects of history in the early ages of the world. The progress of the human race is every where slow and gradual, and the first form of society always rude and imperfect. Asia, like Europe, was originally divided into small co-ordinate states; every city was governed by its own chief, or ruler; and petty principalities, independent of one another, were universally established. *Quot urbes tot regna*, is the description of nations in their original state, in every country of the world. The kingdoms of Nineveh and Babylon consisted each of one mighty city, with its environs. They were properly fortified provinces, in which the people plowed and sowed, and pastured their cattle within the walls. The empires of Assyria, Chaldea, and Persia, were the effect of conquest, the growth of time, and the work of ages. Previous to the period wherein they begin to figure as kingdoms, Egypt becomes the principal scene of historical record; a country which, though not the first inhabited, was the first civilized part of the world.

CHAP. I.

Of the EGYPTIANS.

ANTIENT Egypt consisted of a narrow region, which reached from Syene in Ethiopia, downwards to the Delta, following the course of the Nile. It is bounded on the east by the Red-sea and the Isthmus of Suez, on the south by Ethiopia, on the west by Lybia, and on the north by the Mediterranean. The Nile runs from south to north through the whole country, six hundred miles in length. This long tract is inclosed on each side with a ridge of mountains; the space between the river and the hills on either hand, sometimes extends only to the distance of sixteen miles. On the coast of the Mediterranean the extent of the plain is above three hundred miles*.

Antient Egypt was divided into three principal parts; Upper Egypt, otherwise called Thebais, the most southern division; Middle Egypt, or Heptanomis, so called from the seven districts into which it was divided; and Lower Egypt, which included the Delta and all the country as far as the Red-sea, and along the Mediterranean to Rhinocolura, or Mount Casius. Under Sesostris all Egypt became one kingdom, and was divided into thirty-six governments. The cities of Syene and Elephantina divided Egypt from Ethiopia, and in the days of Augustus were the boundaries of the Roman Empire.

This celebrated country has a claim to the attention of all nations and ages. The Egyptians were the first enlightened and refined people of the

* Diodor, lib. ii. Jul. African. apud Syncell. p. 92.

antient world; and the specimens which they exhibited in arts, and in literature, became models of imitation to other nations. Here philosophy found its earliest seat; and the light of science was kindled, whose radiance diffusing itself over Greece, has successively illuminated the rest of the world. The wisdom of the Egyptians was proverbial among the nations of antiquity. Orpheus and Homer adopted their mythology; Pythagoras and Plato instructed themselves in their mathematical and philosophical discoveries; Lycurgus and Solon studied the principles of their legislation and government. When Greece was in the meridian of its splendour, and renowned for arts, as well as arms, no person could rise to distinction who had not visited the banks of the Nile, and conversed with the fathers of science.

It is difficult to form a just judgment of a people whose history has perished. Our materials of information concerning them are scattered up and down the writings of the early Greeks who travelled into Egypt. To study their history is to walk among ruins. There the vulgar eye discerns nothing but marks of desolation: the contemplative mind may be led, from the natural prejudice in favour of antiquity, to attribute too much to a splendour that has passed away, and to efforts of genius that may return no more. By considering causes in connection with their actual consequences, and forbearing conjecture when unsupported by evidence, errors, whether on the side of admiration or contempt, may be avoided, and a just estimation formed of this singular people.

The formation of Egypt is not the least singular part of its history. This antient country, like Venice or Holland in modern times, was gained from the waters, and is in a great measure the creation of the human hand. The Nile, like the Euphrates, the

the Indus, and the Ganges, annually overflows its banks. The inundation continues for a hundred days, and covers the whole country. The river which overflows the fields, enriches them at the same time; the soil acquires new fertility; and when the waters retire, vegetation comes on with rapidity. The richness of the land, and the beauty of the scene, would tempt inhabitants to occupy this delightful region; frequently would their flocks and herds be swept away. But experience instructs; necessity, the parent of ingenious invention, suggested the means of remedying the evil, and at the same time retaining the benefit of this annual inundation. Accordingly, trenches and canals were cut, to conduct the water through all the country without overflowing it; towns and villages were situated on rising grounds; houses of several stories were reared; and high terraces formed to communicate between one city and another.

At the point where the Nile divides into many streams, the country below was long a morass; but when, in the course of improvement, canals were made, and the waters drained away, it became the richest, and at the same time the most beautiful part of Egypt. It was called Delta, from its triangular figure, and resemblance to the Greek letter of that name; and was divided into a number of islands which swarmed with inhabitants. These islands abounded in towns and cities beyond any part of the world, and were adorned with gardens, containing a profusion of fruit-trees of every kind, particularly palms, peach-trees, and groves of acacia.

On the Lybian side, to the left of the Nile, a chain of mountains, continued almost from the Cataracts to Fayoum, suddenly departs towards Lybia, and returning eastward, forms an immense bason, lower than the bed of the river. This region was

was formerly covered by barren sands. An antient king, named Mœris, conceived the magnificent though arduous project of changing this desart into an useful lake. When the soil was dug, and cleared, he formed a canal, a hundred and twenty miles in length, and three hundred feet wide, to introduce the waters of the Nile. This grand canal, which is still entire, is known by the name of Bahr Youseph, or River of Joseph, and is in many places cut through the rock. In this manner the lake Mœris was formed, "which," according to Strabo *, "for its extent, colour, and shores, resembles a sea."

Two other canals (those of Tamich and Bouch) were cut by this prince, and sluices formed near their mouths, which were shut during the increase of the Nile. During the inundation, the waters entering through the canal of Joseph, were collected in the vast circumference of the lake Mœris, where they were bounded by mountains on one side and mounds on the other. When the Nile decreased, the sluices of the lesser canals were opened, and a body of water, near eighty leagues in circumference †, and thirty feet higher than the usual level of the river, formed a second inundation, directed at will: One part was returned to the Nile for the purpose of navigation; another branched into innumerable rivulets, watered the fields, and diffused fertility in its course.

The richness and abundance of this favoured country are the gift of the Nile. It seldom rains in Egypt: but the river, which waters the whole by its regular inundations, conveys to it the rains and snows of other countries. To multiply the beneficence of the Nile, Egypt was crossed by numberless canals, which run through the whole region. It

* Lib. xvii. † Herodotus.

carried

carried fertility into every field along with its salutary waters; the champaign country was delivered up to it; and the inhabitant rejoiced when he marked his fields disappearing below the wave.

The opinion of the antients concerning the sources of this river, and the causes of its inundation, are no less various than extravagant. Homer has conjectured the truth, who tells us "that the Nile comes down from heaven." The periodical rains which fall in Ethiopia are the cause of this phenomenon. The winds, which in Egypt and Syria are also periodical, during the months of March, April, May, and June, blow from the north, and drive the clouds towards the high mountains, beyond the equator *. Stopped by this barrier, clouds accumulate on clouds, till they descend in rain, which falls in torrents and fills the valleys. The union of an innumerable multitude of rivulets forms the Nile, and produces the inundation. Taking its rise in Ethiopia, this river divides into two branches, one of which, known by the name of Asserac, or the Blue-river, joins the Niger, and, traversing Africa from east to west, falls into the Atlantic ocean. The other, running north, between two chains of mountains, and meeting with rocks of granite which impede its course, pours seven cataracts down into the plain, with a prodigious noise, that is heard at the distance of many miles.

* Savary, letter viii.—The priests knew the origin of the Nile, and communicated the secret to some of the Grecian philosophers. The heavy rains which fall in summer, says Eustathius, (in Odyss. iv.) swell the Nile, as Aristotle and Eudoxus affirm, who say they received this information from the Egyptian priests. They also knew that these rains were occasioned by the north winds.—The rains of Abyssinia are attributed to the Etesian winds, which drive the northen clouds thither. Pliny, lib. v. Pompon. Mela, lib. i.—Democritus had also divined the cause; vide Diodor. Sicul. lib. ii.

 Arriving

Arriving at the first city of Egypt, it falls into a gulf dug by the percussion of its own waters. Descending through this fine country, it fills the canals and lakes, overflows the lands, deposits a fruitful slime, and discharges itself through seven mouths into the Mediterranean.

The increase of the Nile begins early in June, but is not much perceived till the summer solstice, when the waters become troubled, and of a reddish tincture. It continues increasing till near the end of August. A nilometer at Elephantina formerly denoted to what degree the inundation would rise. Travellers, antient and modern, describe with rapture the prospect which Egypt presents at that season of the year. Ascending a mountain, or one of the largest pyramids in Grand Cairo, you behold the river overflowing the country around, the towns and villages appearing above, like islands in the midst of the ocean: the whole interspersed with gardens and groves, whose tops only are visible. Moun ains and woods terminate, at the utmost distance the eye can discover, this singular and fanciful scene.

The Egyptian history is involved in darkness, and intermixed with fable. Not satisfied with their just claim to a high antiquity, the priests and philosophers carried their pretensions to an incredible extent, and traced back their chronology to ages without number. Like the Oriental nations, they have filled up the unknown part of their annals agreeable to their imagination; they have supplied the want of true history with the marvellous, and under the shade of a dark antiquity have reared a splendid but visionary fabric. The priests of Thebes, as we are informed by Herodotus, assigned to their monarchy a duration of 11,340 years; others scrupled not to advance it to a hundred thousand. Manetho, an

Egyptian priest, who wrote about three centuries before the Christian era, and whose authority appeared respectable to Josephus, relates, that Egypt was at first governed by gods and demigods. Vulcan, the first of these reputed divine monarchs, reigned nine thousand years. Thirty-one dynasties of kings succeeded these divinities, and reigned in succession over Egypt for the space of 500,000 years. With regard to these extravagant pretensions to antiquity, we may observe, that there is a point in the annals of all antient nations, where fable ends and history begins. Beyond a certain period, romance supplies the want of authentic information. Human nature is not the subject of record in these fanciful descriptions. Prodigies are related in the place of real events; we find ourselves not on the solid ground of history, but in a fairy scene of fiction; and, instead of the transactions of men, we meet with the adventures of giants and demigods. This is the great criterion by which we distinguish the historical from the fabulous times.

Rejecting, therefore, these absurd and incredible tales, Egypt presents us with the same appearance which we meet with in the early annals of every country, a number of independent principalities, each governed by its head or ruler. The chief of these were Thebes, Thin, Memphis, and Tanis. Menes, who united these under one government, appears to have been the first king of Egypt. According to the most probable conjectures, he began his reign about 330 years after the deluge. The principalities of Egypt, now united under one head, began to figure as a powerful kingdom. Works of public utility were carried on; the marshy grounds were drained; pits were dug to receive the waste waters; Lower Egypt, formerly a morass, began to rival the Higher; and the first kingdom in the world assumed

assumed dignity and splendour. Sacred and civil history agree in confirming the high antiquity of monarchical government in Egypt. In the age of Abraham, about 400 years after the flood, while the plains of Persia were pastured by roaming shepherds, we find Egypt a well-regulated kingdom, flourishing in agriculture, and not only of ability to suffice its own inhabitants, but also to supply the neighbouring nations with corn. Instead of the simple chieftain of an independent tribe, we find a king of the common name of Pharaoh, surrounded by a train of princes, and living in the splendour and luxury of a court. When Joseph was carried a captive to Egypt, the monarch was attended with guards and officers of state, and circled with all that external pomp and magnificence which adorn the majesty of sovereigns in the most polite ages. We behold the kingdom divided into several departments: a council composed of persons of the greatest wisdom and experience; ministers of state; different prisons for the confinement of criminals; a priesthood enjoying settled revenues; public granaries; a trade in slaves; and a commerce with different nations.

From Menes, the first king in Egypt, to Sesostris, there occurs a vast interval, in which history is silent; a long tract of unknown time, marked only by two events, the invasion of the shepherd kings, and the reign of Osymandias. The royal shepherds were natives of Arabia, sprung from those warlike and roving tribes, who never settle in cities, but migrating with their flocks and herds, find their country always before them. These poured from the east in great numbers, and made themselves masters of Lower Egypt. Upper Egypt remained unconquered, and was governed by kings of its own. After the royal shepherds had reigned in the lower part

of

of the country 259 years, they were compelled to retire from Egypt by Aonosis, a powerful monarch, who at that period ascended the throne.

The precise era of Osymandias's reign is also unknown.

His palace, and the other magnificent edifices which he reared, have been celebrated by Diodorus Siculus. He built the first library of the world, and placed this inscription on the front—"The remedies of the mind." His first occupations were military. He gained a complete victory over the Bactrians who had revolted; and after his achievements in war, applied to the works of peace. The magnificence of his reign appears from the inscription upon his statue—"I am Osymandyas, king of kings: he that would comprehend my grandeur, let him surpass me in my works."

The Egyptians were never esteemed a warlike nation. Their country, surrounded almost every where by mountains or seas, defended them by a natural fortification from the approach of enemies. The abundant fertility of the land prevented, or rendered less frequent, those roving expeditions for plunder, which we find among the antient people. Their army, as we are told by Herodotus, amounted in the time of peace, to 41,000; but nothing, except actual war, will ever create warriors. Egypt cultivated the civil rather than the military virtues, and by the love of arts, not the splendour of arms, attracted the admiration of posterity. Notwithstanding, however, her pacific spirit, she enjoyed an age of martial glory, and exhibited a conqueror, who vies for reputation with the most celebrated heroes of antiquity.

Sesostris ascended the throne 1650 years before the Christian era. As the kingdom of Egypt was composed of different principalities, it had been shaken by

by seditions, and was subject to revolts. In order to employ these active spirits, and blend his people in one, Sesostris meditated a military expedition against all his neighbours, or what in those days was called the conquest of the world. He took the necessary measures to assure success to his arms. His first care was to regulate the state of his troops, which had been neglected by his predecessors. The maxim of the Egyptians was to keep on foot a numerous army, or rather militia, divided into two bodies, the Celesyrians and the Hermotybians. Their custom was to distribute these troops into the different provinces of the empire. The soldiers had no pay, and were interdicted the exercise of any mechanic art; but, in requital, the state had provided abundantly for their subsistence. They assigned to each soldier twelve aruras of land, exempted from all taxes: these they let to farmers for a fixed rent. The profession of a soldier was next in honour to the priesthood. When we consider the extent and population of Egypt, we may conclude, that the army fitted out by Sesostris was numerous and powerful; though, at the same time, historians have exaggerated beyond all bounds, when they inform us, that he assembled 600,000 foot, 24,000 horse, and 27,000 armed chariots, besides equipping a fleet of 400 sail on the Red-sea. Having put his army in motion, he marched to the south, and invaded the Ethiopians, whom he defeated and rendered tributary. He passed thence into Asia, and subdued the people as he advanced. Herodotus discovered in the Lesser Asia, from the one sea to the other, monuments of his victories, with the proud inscription of "Sesostris, king of kings, and lord of lords." It is impossible, however, precisely to determine to what point this conqueror carried his arms in that part of the world. Herodotus limits his conquests, on one side,

side, to the Asiatic regions, situated along the Arabian gulf; and on the other, to the eastern provinces of that continent. With respect to Europe, historians agree, that Thrace was the boundary of his conquests.

The expedition of this monarch illustrates the method of making war in these times. The military art was then in its infancy. Armed chariots, as among all nations in the early periods of their history, formed the principal strength of their armies. The rapidity with which Sesostris made his conquests, demonstrate, that the people whom he attacked were ignorant of war. Neither cities nor fortresses retarded the progress of the conqueror. The name of the countries which he subdued, the infinite number of nations whom he conquered, and the short space in which he run his career of victory, are sufficient to demonstrate, that the people he encountered were unwarlike or undisciplined; and that the resistance which he met with, was not that of regular troops. Among uncivilized and barbarous tribes, an army has only to shew itself, to overcome. The expeditions of the antient heroes, prove with what facility a conqueror in these times could over-run the world. This explains the manner in which such a numerous army as that of Sesostris could subsist. The gaining of a battle opened an immense country to the conqueror. The cities, abandoned by the conquered people, supplied the victorious army with provisions. Once, however, the Egyptian host was in danger of perishing. Finding it impossible to subsist in Thrace, they were obliged immediately to return. From this we may infer, that they found in that country a serious resistance to their arms, which they had not elsewhere experienced. The Thracians are ranked among the most warlike nations of antiquity, and were not easily disposed,

disposed, like the feeble inhabitants of the south, to receive the law of the conqueror.

The object of the antient heroes was to establish their military fame, rather than to extend their dominions. Sesostris took no measures to preserve and assure to his successors the vast territories which had submitted to his sword. Satisfied with victory, this monarch never meditated to secure his conquest: Thus they retained no solid consequences. Their duration resembled their rapidity; they were lost as soon as acquired; the vast empire formed by Sesostris did not descend to his posterity.

After an expedition of nine years, he returned to Egypt loaded with spoils, and attended with a numerous train of captives. His exalted genius was not unemployed. He applied to the arts of peace, the same ardour he had expressed in the operations of war. He built magnificent monuments in the style of the Egyptians. A hundred temples to the tutelar gods of all the cities were the first fruits of his victories. He erected two obelisks of marble, 120 feet in height, and covered them with inscriptions, recording the magnitude of his power, the amount of his revenues, and the nations he had conquered. He opened a great number of canals along the Nile, and raised mounds, to which he removed the cities, that they might be protected from the inundations of the river. To provide against the incursions of the Syrians and Arabians, he fortified the east side of Egypt with a wall, which run from Pelusium to Heliopolis, 187 miles in length. These works changed, improved, and defended Egypt.

Ancient conquerors frequently led captive in their train great numbers of the people whom they subdued. History informs us of whole nations transported from one country to another. Sesostris pursued this maxim, and recorded in the inscriptions on his

his pillars,—that his great works were executed by the people he conquered, not by his own subjects.

It is related of this prince, that he was drawn in his chariot by captive kings; what is more astonishing, this ungenerous vanity is extolled by Diodorus Siculus as one of the most shining actions of his life. After a glorious reign, he was seized with blindness, a disease common in Egypt. He refused to procrastinate a miserable life, and fell by his own hand.

Monarchies have often a brilliant period, and after a transient splendour sink into obscurity. From the reign of this king to that of Sesac, Egypt did not signalize itself by any remarkable enterprise: the spirit of martial glory was soon extinguished. As the various provinces were now peaceably united under one head, they began to lose their courage. The works which Sesostris had raised to guard and defend the country, rendered the inhabitants secure and careless. From this time the history of Egypt is a period of darkness, till the reign of Psammetticus, 670 years before Christ. This prince opened his ports to strangers, and the nation began to carry on a profitable traffick with the Greeks.

Under the reign, and by the order of Nechos his son, Phenician navigators sailed round Africa. Apries, the son of Nechos, was dethroned by Amasis, in whose reign the Greeks began to have more frequent intercourse with Egypt. Solon and Pythagoras, followed by a train of sages, left their native land, to study the wisdom of the Egyptians. The reign of Psammetticus, the son of Amasis, is the epocha of the subjection of this famous monarchy. Cambyses, king of Persia, the successor of Cyrus, subdued it in the 525th year before the Christian era. Egypt continued enslaved, or tributary, to the Persian power, till the throne of Cyrus was overturned by Alexander the Great.

Monarchy

Monarchy had been established in Egypt from time immemorial. The throne was hereditary, a proof of its high antiquity; but the power of the king was limited by the laws. The royal code, composed, as we are told, by one of the antient kings, made a part of the sacred books. The public and private life of the monarch, his hours of pleasure, as well as of business, were under the regulations of wisdom. His court was to be composed of persons the most renowned for their abilities and virtues. Rebuke was never addressed to the royal ear, but indirect warnings were given of the errors and vices into which sovereigns might fall. Early in the morning, when he arrived in the temple, the high-priest discoursed on the duties of a sovereign, painted in lively colours a bad king misled by his evil counsellors, imprecated the vengeance of Heaven against those that had led him astray, and besought the gods to bestow upon the prince all royal virtues, justice, magnanimity, and the love of his people. When the sacrifice was ended, the sacred books were opened; a portion of antient history was read, and those actions of illustrious kings set in a fair light, which are most proper to inspire virtue. Religion, which was all-powerful in Egypt, might render these institutions effectual; and there never was a nobler triumph of religion, than in subjecting the lofty heart of a sovereign to the laws.

The custom of sitting in judgment upon monarchs after their death, is in the train of the institutions that I have mentioned, and shew that the kingdom of Egypt was very different from the empires of the east. On the day appointed for the royal funeral, a public audience was held, where all complaints and accusations were received against the deceased monarch. The priest began the solemnity by pronouncing his panegyric. If the king had reigned well,

well, the multitudes who attended, answered with loud acclamations; if he had reigned ill, a general murmur arose, accusers stood forth, and kings have been deprived of burial by the decision of their subjects.

The judgment of the living upon the dead would be striking in every nation, but was calculated to make a particular impression in Egypt, from the prejudices of the people. The Egyptians believed that the soul hovered about the body till putrefaction took place: Hence they looked upon the rites of sepulchre every where so sacred, as connected with their future felicity: and they hoped, by the secret of embalming which they discovered, to survive for ages in the tomb. Thus the sovereigns of Egypt were accountable to the tribunal of the people; and the very idea of such a solemn trial was a strong additional motive to make them discharge the duty of sovereigns. The monarch who erected a pyramid as his future habitation, would be naturally induced to respect the rights of his subjects, that they might assign him a place in the pyramid which he had erected to perpetuate his future fame. The Jews, who borrowed largely from the Egyptians, adopted, in part, this practice. Wicked kings were not buried in the sepulchre of their fathers. This custom prevailed to the time of the Asmonean princes.

From this description of the Egyptian government, it appears, that it was not despotic; it was indeed truly monarchical, from the principle and form of its constitution; and it is the single government of all antiquity which corresponds to our idea of monarchy. Limits were set to the royal power by the laws; the order of succession was regulated; the king had not the right of judging or pronouncing sentence in any civil cause; the administration of justice was confined to a particular body, whose

credit

credit could counterbalance all the authority of the Pharaohs. Thus, to use the language of Montesquieu, the powers were divided. The judicial power was separared from royalty. Thirty judges formed the august tribunal, which decided concerning the lives and fortunes of the people. They had fixed revenues, and held their offices for life, which rendered them independent of the prince. These judges took a solemn oath at their installation, that they would disobey the king, in case he should order them to pronounce an unjust sentence. Besides this college of thirty, which resided at Thebes, particular magistrates in the towns decided in certain causes. The monarch did not even tax his subjects without their consent. The provinces sent from time to time, deputies, who met in the labyrinths to determine all affairs of state. Their manner of administering justice had something in it august and sacred, and gives us the idea of a grave but a just people. No advocate appeared at the tribunal. Eloquence was not permitted to dazzle and deceive. The whole process was committed to writing. The president wore about his neck a figure without eyes, representing truth: he touched with this emblem the head of the party, in whose favour the determination was made.

In consequence of the limited monarchy, that was established in Egypt, we find a greater regard paid to the rights of the subject, than was known or imagined in the Oriental empires. The two great objects of government, security to the property and the lives of the citizens, were maintained by the laws. We have already described the administration of justice. The person of the subject also was protected. A reverence was shewn to the natural rights of man. Human blood was respected. Pecuniary compensations for murder, which mark a certain stage of so-

ciety between barbarity and refinement, were unknown in Egypt. The lives of all the subjects were equally secured. Murder was punished with death, without respect of person or dignity: but a fair trial always preceded the sentence. The summary decisions of despotic government were unknown. The pannel was acquitted or condemned according to the laws.

The sacred records, which, in every particular that regards Egypt, correspond with the best information from classical antiquity, confirm these accounts. Joseph, a Hebrew slave, is accused of having offered the most outrageous and provoking affront to his master, one of the greatest lords in the court of Pharaoh. His lord did not doom him to instant death, as an eastern despot would have done: he sent him to the common prison, that he might be tried according to the laws.

This peculiarity in the Egyptian government arose, I apprehend, from the following cause. It was a fundamental law in Egypt, that the royalty and the priesthood were incompatible. The Egyptians were the most religious people that are recorded in history. The power of the priest is always in proportion to the influence of religion. In Egypt it was immense. Beside the natural influence which the direction of the popular superstition gave them, they were further admitted to the office of civil magistrates; and by their application to letters and to science, they were entrusted with the conservation of the laws, the archives and the public records; with the education of the youth, the composition of the calendar, the survey of the lands, the mensuration of the Nile, and all that pertained to medicine and embalming the dead.

And what effectually secured their authority and influence; the function was not in the gift of the monarch.

narch. The priesthood, like other professions in Egypt, was hereditary, and descended from father to son. By these means they were not only independent of the sovereign, but a check to the royal authority. They held the balance between the king and the people. When there was a vacancy in the throne, the new king was to be chosen from among the priests or the soldiers. If the election was made from the army, the prince was to be initiated into the mysteries of the priesthood before he was crowned.

CHAP. II.

Of the Arts and Sciences cultivated by the EGYPTIANS.

THE arts and sciences which arose in Egypt, contributed to the celebrity which this people enjoy. As they were the first civilized nation in the world, and had no examples to imitate, they are entitled to the praise of genius and invention. Their particular situation urged their application to some arts, and favoured the cultivation of others. Agriculture, the mother of the arts, originated in Egypt. The invention of the plough is ascribed to Osiris;

Primus aratra manu solerti fecit Osiris.

Corn grows spontaneously on the banks of the Nile. The soil is so light, that it is easily cultivated; and the first rude ploughs, though made of wood, were sufficient for that purpose.

The

The land, enriched by the annual overflowing of the Nile, needed only the assistance of art to render it the most fertile part of the world. The warmth of the climate gives them two, and sometimes three, crops in the year. The extraordinary fertility of Egypt was celebrated by the antients. Under the Roman emperors it was the granary of Italy. Under the Greek emperors, they drew from Alexandria all the corn which they consumed at Constantinople. Forty-eight millions of Roman measures of corn were brought from Egypt to Rome in the time of Justinian. The bad policy of the Greeks destroyed the fruitfulness of Egypt. The government prohibited the exportation of corn: Agriculture of consequence soon fell into decay, the banks and canals were neglected, and no other land was sowed, save the fields bordering on the Nile. We need not be surprized, therefore, at the present barrenness of Egypt, in comparison of its antient fertility. Want of cultivation hath turned a great part of it into a desert.

When the introduction of agriculture supplies the necessaries of life in abundance, men begin to cultivate the arts that originate from leisure, and administer to luxury. The mysterious art of working metals forms a remarkable era in the history of civilization. A little reflection will suffice to convince us, how awkward the operations of industry must be, and what a rude scene human life would soon exhibit, without the use of metals. The hand of man is the organ of his power, and metals are the weapon in his hand, with which he extends his dominion. Nature completes the formation of some metals. Gold, silver, and copper, are found, in their perfect state, in the clefts of rocks, in the sides of mountains, or the channels of rivers. These accordingly were the metals first known, and first

applied to use. Among the Egyptians, in the early period of their history; in Spain, when it was visited by the Carthaginians; in America, when it was discovered by the Spaniards; their arms, utensils, and tools, were made of gold, silver, and copper. But iron, the most useful of all metals, is concealed by nature: it is never discovered in its perfect form. The ore indeed is scattered over the earth, but it is difficult to distinguish it from stones or gravel of no value. It must twice undergo the force of fire, and pass through two laborious processes, before it becomes fit for use. Ages must have revolved in society, a series of accidents must have taken place, a multitude of experiments been made and repeated, before this valuable discovery was known. From consulting the records of history, and digging up the instruments of our forefathers, we learn, that mankind endeavoured to supply the want of this metal by flints, bones, and sea-shells. What are called thunder-stones, have been found all over Europe, and are still preserved in the cabinets of the curious: They are made of a hard and almost impenetrable flint, and have the shape of axes, ploughshares, hammers, and wedges. Such tools of stone were frequent over all the continent of America. We learn from Homer, that iron was very little used in the time of the Trojan war. Copper supplied its place: Arms and tools of every kind were made of this metal. A similar usage prevailed among the Romans for many ages. Hence religion, which is ever tenacious of antient customs, retained the use of brass in all the sacred ceremonies. Society can never make great advances without the use of iron. It is the instrument of universal industry; and without it, the genius of man must languish, and the arts be impeded in their career. Early in possession of this discovery, the Egyptians were enabled to

prosecute

prosecute inventions. Masters of this art, they applied with advantage to other improvements.

In the most remote periods of history, we find the arts of luxury and ornament flourishing in Egypt. Precious stuffs, embroidered garments, vases of gold and silver, gems, jewels, and all the apparatus of magnificence, announce a polished and refined people.

A peculiar taste for architecture has distinguished them from every people of the world.

What history records of their buildings, would surpass credibility, were it not attested by their monuments, which remain to this day. Egypt is a scene of antiquities; walking among ruins, the traveller forgets the present, to contemplate the past, and, amid the traces of a degenerate race, marks the remains of a mighty nation. Their buildings are still sublime. The pyramids of Egypt have always ranked among the wonders of the world. Three of them still remain, at the distance of some leagues from Grand Cairo, where Memphis formerly stood. The largest of the three, called the Great Pyramid, forms a square, each side of whose base is 660 feet. The circumference is 2640 feet. The basis covers eleven acres of ground. The perpendicular height is about 450 feet; if measured obliquely, 700. The summit, which viewed from below appears a point, was a platform, each side of which was 18 feet long. The stones with which this enormous edifice was built, were 30 feet in length. A hundred thousand workmen were constantly employed in carrying on this amazing structure. Thirty years were spent in erecting this immense fabric. The sum expended for food to the workmen amounted to 1600 talents, which, comparing the value of money in those days with what it is at present,

amounts to more than two hundred thousand pounds sterling.

The original destination of these most antient monuments of human ingenuity, and which are likely to last coeval with the works of nature, according to the testimony of all antiquity, was to contain the embalmed bodies of the first monarchs of Egypt. The observation of Strabo *, that towards the middle of the height of one of the sides, by raising a stone, an oblique passage is opened, which leads to the coffin of a king, in the centre of the pyramid, forms a striking proof of the antient belief on this subject, and is confirmed by every observation which has been made on these stupendous structures. The Egyptains not only believed in the immortality of the soul, but also in the re-animation of the body, after a long period of years: Hence their extraordinary attention to embalm and preserve the uncorrupted bodies of their departed heroes and deceased friends.

These majestic monuments descend from an unknown antiquity. Herodotus, who wrote 2000 years ago, speaks with as much uncertainty about the time when they were constructed, as we do at present.

Other proofs remain of their very high antiquity. While all the remarkable edifices in Egypt are covered with hieroglyphical inscriptions, no traces of that Egyptain mode of writing appears on the pyramids, because they were erected before hieroglyphical writing was cultivated. A stronger proof of their age still remains. The general idea of Egyptian architecture was entirely taken from the pyramids; which nothing but their high veneration for them, increased by their remote antiquity, could possibly have occasioned; since the figure of these fabrics, so well adapted to triumph over time,

* Lib. xvii.

is

is inconvenient for habitable structures, whether public or private. Yet we find, from the antient ruins of the Higher Egypt, that all the buildings, without exception, were raised on the model of the pyramids. We are suprized to find not only their ports, their doors, but even the walls of their temples and of their towns, inclining to this form*.

The labyrinth was, if possible, more astonishing than the pyramids. The same circuit of walls inclosed 3000 apartments, twelve of which were of a particular form and beauty. They communicated with each other by so many turns and windings, that without a guide the traveller was lost. One half of the chambers was under ground: The labyrinth terminated in a pyramid forty fathoms high.

The obelisks are in the same grand stile, but of a singular composition. The first models were erected by Sesostris, as monuments of his victories: They consisted of one piece of granite, and were 180 feet high. The Romans, in the era of their grandeur, transported some of these monuments to their city; two of them still remain, and, for their antiquity and grandeur, rank among the greatest curiosities in Rome.

Works of a similar form, or in the same stile with the pyramids of Egypt, were found at Babylon, and in several parts of the East.

The fine arts are imitative: The great original is nature. In the early periods of society, before the earth is cultivated and improved by the human hand, the works of nature strike by their greatness, rather than please by their beauty: Hence an incorrect idea of grandeur prevails in the first compositions of all nations of whatever kind. Aiming at the vast and the gigantic, they study to fill the eye, rather than to please it.

* Norden.

Sculpture and painting originated among the Egyptians, but made very inconsiderable progress. Neither genius nor taste appear in their works of this kind. They are equally awkward and incorrect: They knew not how to design simple figures, nor to group their compositions.

They formed their statues by the rules of mathematics, rather than on the principles of taste. The Egyptian sculptors, according to Diodorus, were accustomed to work a statue by separate pieces. They began by making a model of clay. They cut this model into several pieces; every artist took away the part that was allotted to him, and worked after that pattern. This was reducing a fine art to mere mechanical labour.

Their paintings were as imperfect as their sculptures. Their pictures are flat and mean, without any rise, or opposition of colours. A heaviness, monotony, and incorrectness, prevail through the whole. Their hieroglyphics contributed to spoil their taste in painting. By drawing human heads upon the trunks of animals, and the heads of animals upon human bodies, they discompounded being, and multiplied monsters. Hence Apuleius and Ammianus Marcellinus, talking of these figures, call them "animals of another world." In the time of the Ptolemies, Egypt was adorned with elegant buildings, with fine statues and beautiful pictures; but these were executed by Grecian artists.

In one particular the Egyptian painters excelled; a certain preparation they made use of for fixing colours upon marble, and other smooth bodies. Travellers assure us that in many edifices, half in ruins, there are still paintings to be seen, whose gloss and colouring are so lively, so fresh, and so bright, that it seems, say the inhabitants of the country,

try, as if the artist had not yet washed his hands after his work.

The invention of alphabetical letters, and the art of writing, is generally attributed by the antients to the Egyptians. This wonderful art, by which words and thoughts have been painted, by which the inventions and exploits of antiquity have been perpetuated and preserved, and by which the archives of history, and the discoveries of philosophy, may be communicated to all ages, refers its origin to the Egyptian priests. This noblest and most beneficial invention, of which human ingenuity can boast, and which has contributed so much to the improvement of the species, was imperfect in its origin, and advanced to perfection slowly, and by a gradual progression. Picture-writing, or a rude representation of external objects, was the first step in this progress. This mode of recording events prevailed among the antient nations in the infancy of society; and was known to the natives of America when it was discovered. Such awkward delineations represent things, not words; they exhibit images to the eye, not ideas to the understanding: They may therefore be considered as the earliest and most imperfect essay of men in their progress towards discovering the art of writing. The defects in this mode of recording transactions must have been soon felt. To paint every occurrence was from its nature a very tedious operation, and as affairs became more complicated, and events multiplied in society, its annals must have swelled to an enormous bulk. Besides this, no objects could be delineated but those of sense; the conceptions of the mind had no corporeal form, and as picture-writing could not convey an idea of these, it was a very imperfect art. The necessity of improving it roused and sharpened invention, and by successive

steps the human genius advanced, first, from the actual picture to the plain hieroglyphic, next to the allegorical symbol, then to the arbitrary character; until at length an alphabet of letters was discovered, capable of expressing all the variety of combinations of sound employed in speech. Nothing is more simple in appearance, or more profound in reality, than this last invention. A small number of characters, representing every articulate sound of the human voice, serves to express all the thoughts, emotions, and passions of men, and contains distinctly, in a small space, what could not be done by an infinite number of hieroglyphics, but with obscurity and confusion. The date of this discovery is unknown, but ascends to a high antiquity. One parent alphabet suggested the idea of all the rest. The Roman letters, used by the modern European nations, were taken from the Greek; the Greek from the Phenicians, whose characters are the same with those of the Assyrians: All originated from the Egyptians, the form of whose letters is evidently taken from their hieroglyphics. After the invention of an alphabet, hieroglyphics became a sacred language among the Egyptians, and were employed by the priests, to conceal the principles of their philosophy, and their discoveries, from the view of the vulgar.

Egypt was the mother of the sciences as well as the arts. An order of men like the priests, devoted to study and contemplation, had a favourable opportunity to make discoveries, and to investigate truth. There were four colleges in Egypt, where science was studied and taught: Thebes, which Pythagoras visited; Memphis, where Thales and Democritus consulted the Egyptian priests; Heliopolis, where Plato studied; and Sais, where Solon was instructed in the principles of legislation and government.

The

The first important discoveries in astronomy were made by the Egyptians. As they were the first people of antiquity who lived by cultivating the ground, they were under a necessity of studying the motions of the stars. The whole business of agriculture depends upon a knowledge of the seasons, and the course of the sun. In antient times, men had no means of discovering the seasons of tillage and culture, but by the rising and setting of particular stars. The lights of heaven, according to Moses, were for signs to them, for seasons, for days, and for years. The knowledge of these celestial signs, though little attended to at present, was absolutely necessary in the antient world, when the husbandman had no other guide to direct his labours than his own observations. Thus Arcturus, Orion, and the Pleiades, marked out the several seasons among the early Greeks *, and the rising of Syrius with the sun, announced to the Egyptians the overflowing of the Nile, and the customary time of sowing their grain, which was immediately after its retreat.

From the poets and historians of early periods it appears, that the greatest and most polished nations had, for a long time, no other calendar than what was furnished by a few simple observations on the rising and setting of certain stars.

The climate of Egypt is favourable to the study of this science. Night discloses a thousand charms, which the inhabitant of a northern region seldom beholds. Through a transparent veil, which only half conceals the objects in nature, the spectator contemplates the azure of a serene sky, and an infinite number of stars which bespangle the firmament. They have a more brilliant light, and appear larger than in temperate climates. Thick darkness never

* Hesiod, lib. ii.

covers the atmosphere: The blast of tempests never disturbs its tranquillity. Deluges of rain do not render it the image of chaos. The wind falls usually with the sun. Nature remains in a perfect calm. It is then that the astronomer who views the heavens, enjoying the sight of a firmament without clouds, can follow the motion of the stars throughout the immensity of space.

Accordingly, the Egyptians applied early to this study. We are informed by Diodorus, that the Thebans had kept registers of their astronomical observations for an astonishing length of time.

Their obelisks were gnomons for astronomical purposes, and the sides of the great pyramid correspond exactly to the four cardinal points. They were the first people of antiquity who adjusted the length of the year to the annual revolution of the sun, and determined it to consist of 365 days, and six hours. From them the Greeks, and other nations, learned the true duration of the solar year. They seem to have attained a true notion of the system of nature; for they called the moon an ethereal earth, affirmed the stars to be fire, and placed the sun immovable in the centre of the world, round whom the inferior planets revolved. This system Pythagoras is said to have introduced in'o Greece, and communicated to his disciples. This, however, seems rather to have been a happy conjecture, than the genuine offspring of observation and of reasoning. Perhaps the adoration which the Egyptians paid to the sun, led them to place him at rest in the centre of the system, as the station of dignity, while the planets moved round him in obedient orbits. Discoveries which are the consequence of experience or observation, will be continued and supported from the same causes which produced them: But conjectures, unsupported by proof or reasoning, however ingenious

ingenious or just, will soon be forgotten. Ptolemy, the reformer of the calendar, who joined the learning of the Greeks to that of the Egyptians, seems to have been entirely unacquainted with this important discovery.

Geometry and mathematics were cultivated by the Egyptians with considerable success. All authors agree, that geometry was first found out in Egypt; necessity having forced the inhabitants to survey with accuracy, and to measure their lands, the boundaries of which were annually disturbed by the overflowing of the Nile. The grand works which they conceived and executed, the accurate division of their territory, the distribution of the waters of the Nile by an infinite number of canals, the exact measurement of the bed of the river, the fabrication of many different machines for the purposes of architecture; above all, the computation of time, and the calculation of the revolution of the heavenly bodies, are proofs of the progress which they made in these studies. The Greeks were indebted to them for their first discoveries in these sciences. Thales and Pythagoras, as we are informed by Herodotus, did little more than deliver the doctrines which they had learned from the priests of Egypt.

To sum up their character: Without having attained to elegance in the arts, or perfection in the sciences, the Egyptians struck out the models on which other nations improved; and philosophy owes them that respect which an empire pays to its founders.

Among nations who are not blessed by divine revelation, the luminaries of heaven are the first objects of worship. Diodorus Siculus, mentioning the Egyptians, informs us *, " that the first men, look-

‡ Lib. i.

ing up to the world above them, and struck with admiration at the nature of the universe, supposed the sun and moon to be the principal and eternal gods." This, which may be called the natural superstition of mankind, we can trace in the annals of the West, as well as of the East; among the inhabitants of the new world, as well as of the old. The sun and moon, under the names of Isis and Osiris, were the chief objects of adoration among the Egyptians. An order of men, like the priests of Egypt, who were devoted to science, and studied the phenomena of nature, discovered, in the progress of time, that these were the noblest productions and most powerful agents of the Divine Power, and began to recognize a supreme being, who created the heavens, and presides over the universe. The following inscription, engraved in hieroglyphics in the temple of Neith, the Egyptian Minerva, conveys the most sublime idea of the Deity which unenlightened reason could form: "I AM THAT WHICH IS, WAS, AND SHALL BE; NO MORTAL HATH LIFTED UP MY VEIL; THE OFFSPRING OF MY POWER IS THE SUN." A similar inscription still remains at Capua, on the temple of Isis—"THOU ART ONE, AND FROM THEE ALL THINGS PROCEED." Plutarch * also informs us, that the inhabitants of Thebais worshipped only the immortal and supreme God, whom they called Eneph. According to their cosmogony all things sprung from athor, or night, by which they denoted the darkness of chaos before the creation. Sanchoniathon relates, that "from the breath of Gods † and the void ‡ were mortals created." This theology differs little from that of Moses, who says, "the earth was without form, and void, darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

* De Isid. & Osir. † Kolpea. ‡ Baaon.

These

These sublime doctrines of their theology the Egyptians concealed in their temples, and taught only to the initiated in the greater mysteries, which Orpheus introduced into Greece, and which were afterwards established at Rome. Esteeming them too sublime for vulgar conception, they favoured the propensity of the nation to superstition, and erected their own importance on the ignorance and credulity of the people. As religion was the great engine of government in Egypt, popular superstition was reduced to a regular system; mystery was affected; symbol and allegory were introduced; and such a long train of ceremonies, processions, festivals, and shows established, as distinguishes them from other nations.

A superstitious reverence for certain animals, as propitious or disastrous to the human race, was not peculiar to the Egyptians. The cow has been venerated in India from the most remote antiquity. The serpent has been the object of religious respect to one half of the nations of the known world. The Romans had sacred animals, which they kept in their temples, and distinguished with peculiar honours. We need not therefore be surprized, that a nation so superstitious as the Egyptians, should honour with peculiar marks of respect the ichneumon, the ibis, the dog, the falcon, the wolf, and the crocodile. These they entertained at great expence, and with much magnificence. Lands were set apart for their maintenance; persons of the highest rank were employed in feeding and attending them; rich carpets were spread in their apartments; and the pomp at their funerals corresponded to the profusion and luxury which attended them while alive.

What chiefly tended to favour the progress of animal-worship in Egypt, was the language of hieroglyphics, which prevails in every country before the

the invention of letters. In the hieroglyphic inscriptions on their temples and public edifices, animals, and even vegetables, were the symbols of the gods whom they worshipped.

Accustomed to behold allegorical and symbolical figures in the sanctuary, the people forgot the invisible object of adoration in the emblem by which it was expressed, and sunk into that superstition which was so congenial to their gross conceptions. The Greeks and Romans annexed a kind of sanctity to the images of their gods, and the people even adored them; but while the multitude prostrated themselves before the idol, the wise adored the divinity.

In the midst of innumerable superstitions, the theology of Egypt contained the two great principles of religion, the existence of a supreme being, and the immortality of the soul. The first is proved by the inscription on the temple of Minerva; the second by the care with which dead bodies were embalmed, and the prayer recited at the hour of death, by an Egyptian, expressing his desire to be received to the presence of the deities.

As Egypt was the seat of legislative wisdom, and gave birth to law as well as to the arts, it will be requisite to mention some of their laws. Civil law shews us the state of property among a people, and their manner of life. As the Egyptians were a busy and commercial nation, "every inhabitant was obliged to give in his name and profession to the governor of the province where he lived. If he gave in a wrong information, or procured his livelihood in an unlawful way, he was punished with death." Solon introduced a similar law among the Athenians. The subject of debts, in many of the antient states, was a source of perpetual troubles and commotion. In Egypt every citizen was considered as belonging to the state, and of consequence the goods of the debtor,

debtor, not his person, were answerable for the debt. Asychis made an effectual law to give security to trade. A man might borrow on the pledge of his father's dead body, which was to be put into the hands of the creditor; and if he did not redeem it, he himself was to be deprived of the honours of sepulture; the greatest ignominy which could befall an Egyptian.

Criminal law is founded on two original principles in human nature: the resentment of the sufferer, when an injury is inflicted; and the feelings of men, when a man is injured. Nature hath constituted man the guardian of his own rights, and the avenger of his own wrongs. Revenge is a strong principle of human nature: it is instinctive. Men repel harm from immediate impulse, and wreak their resentment upon inanimate objects that hurt them. It is the guardian of society, and the preventative of injury and crimes. The object of resentment is retaliation; is to inflict on the offending person the evil that he hath committed. Accordingly, retaliation forms the criminal code of all early nations, and continues in some degree through every period of society. Murder is always punished with death. The voice of nature is—eye for eye, tooth for tooth: he that sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed. We find the criminal law of Egypt either founded on this principle, or alluding to it. Murder was punished with death, whether the person slain had been free or a slave. A calumniator was condemned to the same punishment; the person would have suffered, if the accusation had proved true. The power of life and death, which the father in barbarous ages exercised over his family, which always prevailed among the eastern nations, and long among the Romans, was early checked in the regular form of government established among the Egyptians.

Egyptians. The authority of a master over his slaves, and the use of torture in their trial, which was only abolished at Rome under the reign of Adrian, never seems to have prevailed in Egypt.

Laws are the standard of a people, with regard to barbarity or refinement. These laws of the Egyptians give us a high idea of their civilization.

The earliest population is on the banks of rivers. The beauty and fertility of Egypt would attract inhabitants to the margin of the Nile. The disasters which they suffered by the overflowing of the river, would lead them to study the means of guarding against such inundations in the time to come. The additional fruitfulness, which the land acquired by being thus watered by the Nile, would still allure them; and necessity, the great prompter of mankind, would suggest the means of remedying the evil. While the barbarous tribes in their neighbourhood wandered from region to region, in quest of new pastures and more fruitful fields, the inhabitants of Egypt had no occasion to remove from a country, whose fertility was renewed by the annual overflowing of the Nile, and would feel an additional attachment to a scene, which was in a great measure the work of their own hands. When the principle of improvement is once set a-going, society begins its progress.

If we look over the world, we shall find that the arts have arisen in similar situations. A scene where the favours of nature are to be purchased by ingenuity and industry, calls forth invention; difficulties heighten the ardour of the pursuit; and obstacles in the way encourage the active and improvable nature of man.

The finest and most flourishing provinces in China were gained from the sea. Venice, rising from a marshy lake, was the first great maritime power of modern

modern Europe. The barren territory of Attica bloomed with every art, and with every science; while the fertile banks of the Eurotas were inhabited by unlettered barbarians.

2. The Egyptians early applied to agriculture, which, by introducing the complete idea of property, lays the foundation of law. The most nutritious vegetables flourish on the banks of the Nile, the light soil is easily cultivated, and the warm climate gives them two, and sometimes three, crops in the year. When man, ceasing to roam, becomes an inhabitant of the soil, and a possessor of land, laws and regulations become necessary to transmit possessions, and dispose of inheritances. This gave rise to established rights, to jurisprudence, and to the civil code. It is the plough that hath civilized mankind. When the antients gave Ceres the title of legislatress, and called a festival celebrated in her honour by the name of Thesmophoria, they gave the people to understand, that agriculture, by establishing property, laid the foundation of law. From law arises security; from security, leisure; from leisure, curiosity; from curiosity, the arts and sciences.

3. Egypt at an early period was crossed by canals, which connecting the cities with one another, favoured the cultivation of manufactures and arts. Upper Egypt extends no-where to a great distance from the Nile. In Lower Egypt the river breaks itself into many different canals, which, assisted by art, opened a communication by water-carriage, not only with great towns, but with villages, as in Holland at this day. By the extent and facility of inland navigation, the whole country was connected, and additional motives suggested to industry and improvement.

From these causes Egypt, though not the first inhabited, was certainly the first civilized country of the world.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

The Assyrian *or* Babylonian *Empire.*

THE boundaries of Assyria, according to the description of the Greek and Roman writers, comprehended all the countries and nations between the Mediterranean on the west, and the river Indus on the east, and between the deserts of Scythia on the north, and the southern or Indian ocean. This empire having once extended over so large a portion of Asia, the provinces under its dominion came to be distinguished by the name of the Sovereign State, and retained the appellation long after the dissolution of that great monarchy. Thus Mesopotamia was called Middle Assyria; the same name was also given to Babylon and Chaldea; and according to Justin *, the country of Syria was first called Assyria.

Assyria Proper, which gave name to the other provinces, was bounded on the north by part of Armenia and Mount Niphates, on the west by the Tigris, on the south by Susianah, and on the east by Media. In the province of Adiabene, and on the banks of the Tigris, stood the celebrated city of Ninus, or Nineveh. Its dimensions, according to Strabo, exceeded those of Babylon; and we are informed by Diodorus Siculus, that it was forty-seven miles in circumference, and surrounded by lofty walls and towers, the former a hundred feet in height, the latter two hundred. As this country lies between 33 and 39 degrees of north latitude, in

* Lib. i. cap. ii.

its

its flourishing periods it was remarkable for its fertility, and produced the fruits of the earth in abundant profusion: but since the fall of its empire, having become frequently the seat of war, it is now almost a wilderness, except some spots of cultivation around its few and inconsiderable towns.

Babylonia, or Chaldea, lies between thirty and thirty-five degrees of north latitude, and was bounded on the north by Mesopotamia, on the east by the Tigris, on the west by the desert of Arabia, and on the south by the Persian gulf, and part of Arabia the Happy. This country enjoys a salutary atmosphere, though extremely noxious at certain seasons of the year. Rain seldom falls in this climate, and the earth was watered by the river, which was here diffused by human industry, as the Nile was over Egypt by nature. All the country of Babylon was intersected by canals, the greatest of which was navigable, and flowed from south to north, from the Euphrates to the Tigris. The engines and wheels which they employed to water their lands, were so numerous on the banks of the Euphrates, as sometimes to impede the navigation of the river *. The richness of the soil, and the excellence of the climate, were improved by the industry of the inhabitants; so that Herodotus compares this country to Egypt for its fertility. Being irriguous, and for the most part low and flat, it abounded with aquatic shrubs, and was called the Valley of Willows. The vine, the olive, and the fig-tree, did not flourish here; but palms sprung spontaneously, chiefly those of the date kind, which supplied the inhabitants with food, wine, and honey. For luxuriancy of grain, this country is celebrated by Herodotus †. The millet and the sesame shot up to the size of trees;

* Plut. Sympos. lib. iii. † Lib. i.

the

the leaves of the wheat and the barley were usually four fingers broad; and, in the language of antiquity, the earth yielded a hundred, and sometimes three-hundred fold. Under the Persian empire the country of Babylon yielded a third part of the produce of Asia. This fertility was partly owing to the annual inundations of the Tigris and the Euphrates, which took place in the months of June, July, and August, by the melting of the snow on the Armenian mountains. Canals were cut through all the country, by which the waters were distributed, the soil enriched, and an easy communication effected between distant cities. The river Euphrates, from which many channels were cut in the plain of Babylon, has its source in the mountains of Armenia; and, after washing the eastern skirts of Syria, and dividing Arabia from Mesopotamia, it proceeds to the south-east, and mixing its waters with the Tigris, falls at length into the Persian gulf. This country is supposed, by the most rational and learned divines, to have inclosed the garden of Eden within its boundaries.

Babel is the first city we find mentioned in Scripture, and in point of antiquity was prior to that of Nineveh. These two cities were the capitals of two petty kingdoms, and continued separate 440 years, governed by distinct monarchs, till Ninus conquered the kingdom of Babylon, and laid the foundation of that formidable power which governed Asia for so many ages. This event, which united the two monarchies into one state, under the name of the Assyrian empire, happened about 290 years after the flood, 2059 before the Christian era.

Having subdued the Babylonians, Ninus began to extend his conquests, subjected many of the neighbouring states to his power, and, by uniting kingdom to kingdom, enlarged the boundaries of the

the Assyrian empire. Marching from conquest to conquest, he subdued Media, Persia, Armenia, and in seventeen years annexed to his dominions the western kingdoms of Asia. Having turned his arms against Oxyartes, monarch of Bactria, he met with a more vigorous resistance than he had before experienced. After many fruitless attempts to reduce the capital of Bactria, he at last made himself master of the place, by the contrivance and conduct of Semiramis, wife of Menon, a captain in his army. The spirit and bravery of this heroine charmed the victorious monarch; and with the consent of her husband, he made her the partner of his throne and of his bed*. On his return to Nineveh, his queen bore him a son, to whom he gave the name of Ninyas; and dying soon after, committed the infant prince to the guardianship of Semiramis, whom he appointed regent of the empire.

This masculine and ambitious princess followed the footsteps of her husband, and endeavoured to signalize her reign by illustrious actions and achievements. She removed her court from Nineveh to Babylon, which she surrounded with a wall, and embellished with magnificent structures. Having added splendour to the seat of her empire, and confirmed her authority over the neighbouring kingdoms, she raised a numerous army, and attempted the conquest of India. But here she experienced the powerful resistance which was made to Ninus; and after an unsuccessful war, was obliged to return to Babylon with a small remainder of her forces. Ctesias, Diodorus Siculus, and Trogus Pompeius (abridged by Justin), have exaggerated the forces, and embellished the exploits, of Ninus and Semiramis; but the existence and splendour of the first

* Diod. Sic. lib. ii. Justin, lib. i.

Assyrian

Assyrian empire are confirmed both by sacred and profane history: Arrian, Athenæus, Strabo, Suidas, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, and every judicious enquirer into antiquity, refer to the events and transactions of this celebrated monarchy. Plato expressed the prevailing opinion of his age, when he affirms, that the kingdom of Troy, during the reign of Priam, was a dependency of the Assyrian empire*.

Ninyas ascended the throne of Assyria after the death of Semiramis. As the force of the empire was exhausted by the ambitious plans and military expeditions of his predecessors, he consulted the tranquillity of his subjects, and applied to the arts of peace. He is represented by historians as a feeble and effeminate prince, who sequestered himself from the eyes of his subjects, and passed his days in indolence among eunuchs and women. But it is probable that these accounts have originated from a disposition in authors to celebrate a turbulent and warlike reign, if crowned with conquests, and to overlook the merits of an administration employed in the silent, but happier arts of peace. But although he did not engage in foreign wars, nor endeavour to enlarge the boundaries of his empire, he took proper precautions to regulate, by wise institutions, the extensive dominions which he inherited from his parents. He established an army in the capital, which was annually relieved by forces raised from other parts of the empire. He committed the government of the provinces to persons of experienced wisdom and tried fidelity, to prevent revolts in distant countries, and preserve the public tranquillity. He is said to have effected the sequestered state of distant majesty, which succeeding

* Plato de Legib. lib. iii.

...st were ambitious to imitate; and ...lt access, in order to increase the ...s subjects. He seems, however, to ...ned the throne of Ninus, and, after a ...reign, to have transmitted his empire of his successors, so wisely regulated, as to last, in a line of kings of unknown or obscure fame, for more than eight hundred years.

From Ninyas, the son and successor of Semiramis, to that of Sardanapalus, we find an astonishing blank in the history of Assyria and Babylon. Tables of the kings who swayed the sceptre during that period are given by historians*; but the records of their reigns are lost; nothing appears in detail; the annals of Assyria are torn from the volumes of history.

The obscurity of this period is commonly attributed to the indolence and effeminacy which the antient Assyrian monarchs adopted from Ninyas; but perhaps this silence of historical records is less to be ascribed to the inactivity of these princes, than to the tranquillity which the people enjoyed under their government. The virtues of a pacific reign are not so striking and splendid as the fame of military talents, and the glory of conquests. The history of this antient empire is transmitted to us by the Greeks, a restless and turbulent people, engaged in perpetual commotions, who esteemed nations only as they were warlike, and who imagined that victories and important revolutions were the only events worthy of being recorded. Lovers of the marvellous, and disposed rather to captivate the imagination than to enlighten the understanding, they desiderated in the Assyrian annals those shining incidents and illustrious achievements which strike

* Euseb, Chron. lib. ii. Syncell. p. 103, 108, &c.

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the imagination and fix the attent
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preceptors in the arts and sciences,
confine their knowledge of antiquity t
ted people.

We ought not, therefore, to imagine that the successors to the throne of Ninyas were addicted to the vices of indolence and effeminacy. All the antient historians acknowledge, that no empire boasted of such a long duration and uninterrupted prosperity as that of the Assyrians. During the course of ages no revolution took place: A pacific and happy people escaped the records and the crimination of history.

The Assyrians, after having held the empire of Asia for many ages, began to decline. During the feeble and voluptuous reign of Sardanapalus, the Medes revolted, and their example was followed by other nations. Three kingdoms arose from the ruins of this great empire: the monarchy of the Medes, founded by Arbaces, who had conspired against the last Assyrian king; that of Babylon, seized by Belesus, who had joined in the conspiracy; and that of Nineveh, called the Second Empire of the Assyrians, whose first king took the name of Ninus the Younger.

The second Assyrian empire subsisted with some splendour after the dismemberment of the first. Nineveh still continued the capital of a great kingdom. The names and actions of the monarchs who filled the throne till its final destruction, are handed down to posterity: the Sacred Books record the devastations they committed in Judea. Pul, the first Assyrian king who is mentioned in Scripture, invaded the kingdom of Israel during the reign of Menahem, but departed without committing hostilities, upon receiving a thousand talents of silver.

Tiglath-

, his successor, attacked the same
aving reduced Galilee, and the land
carried the inhabitants captive to
t the request of Ahaz, king of Judah,
ad become his tributary, he marched into Syria, subdued that antient kingdom, transplanted its inhabitants to Upper Media, and slaying Rezin their king, put an end to the Syrian monarchy.

After a reign of twenty years, he was succeeded by Salmanasar. Hosea, the tributary king of Israel, resolving to shake off the Assyrian yoke, entered into a league with So, king of Egypt; upon which Salmanasar invaded Samaria with a numerous army. Having ravaged the country, he besieged the capital, which surrendering after a siege of three years, he carried the inhabitants into captivity, strangers being sent from Babylon, and the adjacent cities, to cultivate the territories of the Jews. Thus Syria and Israel were annexed to the Assyrian empire.

Senacherib, on his accession to the throne, marched against Hezekiah, the king of Judah, with a powerful army, and reduced many of his fortified towns. The interposition of Providence preserved Jerusalem from his fury, by the miraculous destruction of his army in one night. This event, though disguised in the narration, is confirmed by Herodotus. Having been slain by his two elder sons, as he was worshipping in the temple of his god Nisroch, he was succeeded by his third son, Esarhaddon or Assaradin, who is honourably mentioned in the book of Ezra. He re-established the power, and enlarged the boundaries of the empire, which, under his father, had fallen to decay. An interregnum happening in the kingdom of Babylon, he improved the opportunity, and united that neighbouring state to his dominions. After he had reigned with great felicity and success forty-two years over the Assyrians, and thirteen

over the Babylonians, he was suc
Saosduchinus, who in the book of
Nebuchodonosor. A few years afte
to the throne, the Medes, under their
ortes, invaded Assyria. Collecting a powe
from the provinces of his extensive empire, Nebuchodonosor engaged Phraortes in the great plain of Ragau, totally defeated his army, and taking the monarch prisoner, put him to death. Improving his victory, he reduced many of the cities in Media, stormed the celebrated capital, Ecbatana, and levelled it with the ground.

In the reign of his son Sarac, the Medes, under Cyaxares, the son of Phraortes, not only recovered the provinces which the Assyrians had lately conquered, but defeated them in a pitched battle, and compelled them to shelter themselves in Nineveh. Sarac having incurred the contempt of his subjects by his unwarlike and effeminate character, Nabopalassar, commander of the troops in Chaldea, revolted from him, and seized on the kingdom of Babylon. Having drawn to his alliance Cyaxares, the Median monarch, they marched against Nineveh, which they besieged, and laid in ruins, Sarac having in despair set fire to his palace, and consumed himself and all his treasures in the flames. The destruction of the capital put an end to the kingdom of Assyria *. It fell, to rise no more. The very name of it was lost. The monarchy was divided between the Babylonians and the Medes; and from this time history makes no more mention of the Assyrians.

The kingdom of Babylon, which was seized by Belesis after the fall of the first Assyrian empire, subsisted in some splendour, in the neighbourhood of its powerful rival. Belesis was succeeded by Nabonas-

* Herodot. lib. i. cap. 106.

sar,

sar, from whose taking possession of the throne, commences that famous era known by the name of the era of Nabonassar. It corresponds to the 747th year before Christ. From this time Babylon was governed by kings of its own. The ambitious and warlike Assyrian monarchs, who grasped at the sovereignty of the East, and waged war with all the nations around them, committed no hostilities against their Chaldean neighbours, till the reign of Esarhaddon, their fifth king. From the harmony that reigned between these neighbouring kingdoms, it is probable that they were governed by princes of the same family, the younger branch at Babylon acknowledging a kind of subjection to the elder at Nineveh. During an interregnum that took place after the sixth successor of Nabonassar, Assaraddin king of Assyria took possession of Babylon, and the kingdoms became united. In the reign of Sarac, as we have already mentioned, Nabopalassar, the governor of Babylon, having entered into an alliance with Cyaxares the Mede, Nineveh was destroyed, and the seat of empire transferred to Babylon. Nabopalassar, advancing in years, associated his son Nebuchadnezzar as his partner in the throne. This warlike and ambitious prince, assembling a powerful army, marched against the Egyptians at Carchemish; and having recovered that city, put the garrison to the sword. He then marched against Judea, took Jerusalem, plundered the temple, and made Jehoiakim prisoner; but upon his submission to his authority, and promise of paying an annual tribute, he re-instated him on the throne; then pursuing his conquests, he reduced all Palestine, to the borders of Egypt. Succeeding to the sole possession of the throne, at the death of his father, he applied himself to extend his conquests, as well as to secure those that he had made. The tributary king of Jerusalem having re-

volted,

volted, and entered into an alliance with Pharaoh Hophra, or Apries, king of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar assembled an army, and marching into Judea, in a few days became master of the whole kingdom, except Lachish, Azekah, and Jerusalem. Having besieged the capital, he took it by storm; and plundering the temple, the palace, and the treasury, he carried the inhabitants captives to Babylon, and put an end to the Jewish monarchy.

On the twenty-first year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar invaded Syria, and sat down with his army before Tyre; but after a thirteen years siege, he found an evacuated city, the inhabitants having retired to a neighbouring island. From Tyre he marched into Egypt, and having made a conquest of that country, brought from thence an immense booty, and an incredible number of captives. About the same time he extended his arms to the Ethiopians and Libyans, and subdued those nations*.

Having obtained a name in arms, beyond any of his predecessors, this victorious monarch now sought the less splendid, but more useful glory of arts; improved and embellished the capital of that empire, the boundaries of which he had extended; and investing Babylon with new splendour, made it one of the wonders of the world.

The great works that defended, adorned, and have immortalized that celebrated capital of the eastern world, are ascribed to Nebuchadnezzar and Nitocris his spouse, by Berosus †, Megasthenes ‡, and Herodotus §; and their testimony is confirmed by the authority of sacred Scripture. The most famed of these magnificent monuments were the walls of the city, the temple of Belus, the hanging gardens, the

* Ezek. xxx. 4. † Joseph. adv. Appian. lib. i. cap. 6.
‡ Euseb. Preparat. lib. ix. cap. 41. § Lib. i. p. 185.

bridge,

bridge, and the banks of the river, with the artificial lake and canals.

As the civilized nations of Asia were in the neighbourhood of barbarous and wandering hordes, who frequently sallied from their wilds and deserts to ravage the cultivated plains, it became absolutely necessary, before monarchs had established revenues and standing armies, to provide for the defence of the kingdom against these foreign invaders. The most natural and obvious plan for this purpose was that of fortification, by high and impregnable walls. As the early kingdoms of the East consisted only of one city*, and its environs, and as these were generally fortified, when kingdoms began to enlarge, and capitals to increase, the same mode of defence was adopted. Nineveh and Babylon were not cities, in the modern sense of the word, but rather fortified provinces, which contained gardens, arable ground, pasture for cattle, and every thing requisite for the subsistence of the inhabitants. The wall of China, which still subsists, and even makes a figure in the map of the world, may serve as a specimen of these fortifications, which in ancient times were not confined to the circumference of a city.

Nineveh, according to Diodorus †, formed an oblong square, the two greater sides of which extended to a hundred and fifty stadia, or furlongs, in length, and the two lesser to ninety; the total circuit was consequently four-hundred and eighty stadia, or sixty miles. The expression used by the prophet Jonah, "that Nineveh was a great city of three days journey," justifies this description of profane historians, while at the same time the prophet gives us grounds to conclude, that this capital was not peopled in proportion to the extent of its walls. Children

* Quot urbes, tot regna. † Lib. ii. p. 115.

make a fifth part of the inhabitants of a city; and as these in Nineveh amounted only to a hundred and twenty thousand, the population becomes limited to six-hundred thousand, inferior to that of Paris or of London, though the boundaries were six times more extensive.

Babylon, according to Herodotus*, who beheld the remains of its splendour, was equal in compass to Nineveh; but, as it formed a perfect square, contained a great extent of ground. The outward wall was three-hundred feet high, seventy-five broad, extending sixty miles in circumference, and surrounded by a deep ditch, continually supplied with water. Behind this extraordinary bulwark was another of almost equal dimensions. These walls formed an exact square, each side of which was fifteen miles in length: They were built of large bricks, cemented together with bitumen, a glutinous slime which issues out of the earth in that country, and in a short time grows harder than the very brick and stone which it cements. In every side of this great square were twenty-five gates, that is, a hundred in all, formed of solid brass. Between every two of these gates, at proper distances, were three towers, and four more at the four corners of the great square, each ten feet higher than the walls. As some parts of the walls were built on a morass, and inaccessible by an enemy, the labour and expence of rearing turrets were spared, so that the whole number of the towers amounted only to two hundred and fifty. From the twenty-five gates in each side of this great square, went twenty-five streets, in straight lines to the opposite gates, each fifteen miles long, and crossing at right angles. Four streets, also, went round the city, next to the walls, two hundred

* Lib. i. p. 178.

feet broad, having houses on one side, and the walls on the other. By the intersection of the fifty streets, the city was divided into six hundred and seventy-six squares, each two miles and a quarter in compass. Round these squares, on every side towards the streets, stood the houses, three or four stories in height, and beautified with all manner of ornaments. The large void space in the middle of each square was employed for the purposes of gardening and agriculture.

On each side of the river stood a magnificent palace; the old palace on the east side, and the new palace, which was built by Nebuchadnezzar, on the west, the former of which was four miles, and the latter eight, in circumference. The temple of Belus, which was situated near the old palace, was composed of eight towers placed one above another, diminishing as they ascended in the form of a pyramid. According to Herodotus it was a square of a furlong on each side, and according to Strabo a furlong in height. This tower exceeded the highest of the Egyptian pyramids by a hundred and seventy-nine feet, though it fell short of its breadth at the bases by thirty-three. The way to ascend was by stairs around it on the outside, whence it is probable that the whole ascent was, by the benching in, drawn in a sloping line from the bottom to the top, eight times round it, which gave it the appearance of eight towers, one above the other. Till the time of Nebuchadnezzar this tower was all the temple of Belus; but as he enlarged or adorned the other antient buildings of the city, so he likewise made additions to this, by vast edifices erected round it, in a square of two furlongs on every side. These buildings were inclosed by a wall, which is supposed to have extended round one of the great squares of the city. Over the whole, on the top of the tower, was an observatory, by the be-

 nefit

nefit of which the Chaldees pursued their astronomical discoveries.

The riches inclosed in the temple of Belus corresponded to its prodigious extent. Without mentioning the tables and censers, the cups and other sacred vases of massy gold, there was a golden statue forty feet high *, which weighed a thousand Babylonish talents, and was worth three millions and a half of our money. Xerxes demolished this temple, and Alexander the Great undertook to rebuild it. He attempted to clear the place and remove the ruins. Ten thousand workmen, who were employed for two months in these operations, were unable to accomplish them †. Such is the idea which the antients have given us of this magnificent temple.

Among the wonders of Babylon, Diodorus and Strabo rank the hanging gardens, which Nebuchadnezzar is supposed to have constructed to gratify his spouse Amyite, daughter to Astyages, king of Media, who retaining a passionate attachment to the mountains and forests of her native country, wished to behold the resemblance of them at Babylon. But the silence of Herodotus, who had carefully visited Babylon, on a work so singular and romantic, and the doubtful manner in which Quintus Curtius expresses himself on this subject, are sufficient to shew, that these gardens owed their chief embellishment to the imagination of the Greeks.

The bridge, with the artificial lake and the canals, will be considered afterwards, when an account will be given of the progress of the arts and sciences among the Chaldeans.

* This however was exceeded by the image erected on the plains of Dura, which, according to Daniel, was sixty cubits, or ninety feet in height.

† Strabo, lib. xvii. Arrian. Expedit. Alexand. lib. vii. p. 480.

The number of victories obtained by Nebuchadnezzar, the extent of his conquests, and the magnificence of his capital, began at last to intoxicate his mind. Contemplating the glories of that city, which was the work of his own hands, he exclaimed in the pride of his heart, "*Is not this great Babylon which I have built for the house of my kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?*" No sooner had he uttered this insolent boast, than "the kingdom departed from him;" his pride terminated in a state of insanity; he was driven from the society of men, and dwelt with the beasts of the field.

CHAP. IV.

Of the Form of Government, Religion, Sciences, Arts, Manners, and Customs of the BABYLONIANS.

THE government of this nation was monarchical, or rather despotic, and the crown hereditary. To render the submission of the people more respectful, the proud monarchs of Babylon affected divine honours, and retired from the public eye. The administration of public affairs was committed to officers, divided into three classes, and chosen from the nobility, the most respected for their wisdom and abilities*. The first had the charge of the virgins, and of their disposal in marriage; the second took cognizance of thefts; and the third of all other crimes.

* Strabo, lib. xvi.

The subordinate powers under the great king were divided into princes, governors, captains, judges, treasurers, and counsellors, who preserved order in the empire, and regulated the civil as well as military œconomy. The chief officers of the royal household were, the captain of the guard, the prince of the eunuchs, and the prime minister, who exercised the functions of the vizier among the Turks. The first of these had the execution of the arbitrary commands of the prince; the second had the charge of the women, and superintended the education of the youth in the palace; and the third sat in the king's gate, to hear complaints, and to administer justice. Besides these, the master of the magi was always at hand, to interpret omens, and prognosticate futurity. The attendants on the king were distinguished by comeliness of person and excellence of parts; and his wives and concubines, selected for their beauty from all parts of the kingdom, appear to have been numerous. Notwithstanding the affected state and recluse dignity of these monarchs, they sometimes condescended to feast and to revel with the lords and chief men of their dominions, of whom we read, that a thousand were at one time entertained by Belshazzar*.

The laws of this empire were vague and uncertain, and, notwithstanding the influence of antient customs, depended on the caprice of the monarch. The punishments also seem to be arbitrary, and rigorous in proportion to the fury of the tyrant; such as beheading, cutting to pieces, burning in a fiery furnace, and turning the criminal's house into a dunghill.

The propensity of human nature to superstition is so great, that the rudiments of science among all nations are always blended with their religious tenets.

* Dan. i. ii. iii. &c.

More

More particularly did this union prevail among the Babylonians, as the Chaldees were not only their priests, but also their sages or learned men; their religion and philosophy become therefore inseparable, and cannot be referred to different heads. The worship of the sun, the moon, and the host of heaven, was the established and universal religion of the East from the earliest ages. Bel * and Nabo, or the sun and moon, were the chief divinities of the Chaldeans; and fire was reverenced as the image or symbol of the sun: The form of their worship, their rites and ceremonies, are particularly described by Moses. The groves on high places, or the tops of mountains, in which they sacrificed to their gods; the altars and graven images which they erected; the fire-temples in which they offered their children to Moloch †; their priests, diviners, prophets, enchanters, necromancers, together with religious prostitutes for the purpose of an impure worship, are enumerated by the Jewish legislator, and described by the prophets in the decline of the Assyrian empire.

The worship of the celestial luminaries leads by easy steps to judicial astrology. When the stars or planets are considered as gods, it is natural, and even rational, to suppose that they have an influence on human affairs, and indicate or determine the events of life.

The phenomena of the heavens will assume new importance, when they are considered as predicting the history of the earth; an eclipse of the sun or moon will be beheld with terror, as well as astonishment, when it is regarded as the indication of divine wrath, and the omen of future calamity. The priests and magi availed themselves of this credulity of the people, and of that unaccountable desire in human

* Bel, or Baal, signifies Lord. † Another name for the sun.

nature of penetrating into futurity, to establish their influence, and secure dominion over the minds of men. The astronomer, or observer of the heavens, became the interpreter of the gods, and was believed to have it in his power to affect mankind with happiness or misery. Hence arose the power and authority of the Chaldees, who possessed the same influence, and enjoyed the same privileges as the priests in Egypt. Devoted to the interest of their order, they usurped the whole province of superstition; pretended to inspiration; and predicted future events, by the rules of augury, the flight of birds, and the inspection of victims. They interpreted dreams, and explained all the extraordinary phenomena of nature that portended good or evil to man. They built temples to the stars on the tops of high mountains, and in the midst of groves; kindled in them the ever-burning fires; adorned them with images or statues, and convened the credulous multitude to wonder and adore.

Such was the origin of the Sabian superstition, which was afterwards propagated among the nations of the East. In their transition from planet-worship to image-worship, the Sabians denied that they paid adoration to uninformed wood, stone, or metal; but affirmed, that the virtues of the planet were infused into the image by which it was represented: this they pretended to effect, by forms of consecration, and by various incantations, employed to draw down the intelligence and influence of the stars into their respective idols. Hence arose the superstition of talismans, which still prevails in the East.

The fame of the Chaldees for learning has been celebrated beyond measure by the ignorance and credulity of historians. They formed theories concerning the earth; but these are involved in obscurity which we cannot penetrate, and disguised by allegories

allegories which we cannot explain. They taught that the world was eternal, that it never had a beginning, and would never have an end. They acknowledged however, a divine providence, and affirmed that the motions of the heavens were performed by the guidance and direction of superior agents. As the magi, or priests, were a separate profession at Babylon, as over all the East, the office was also hereditary; the same traditions and the same doctrines descended from father to son; and in the course of ages, no accession was made to their learning or philosophy.

The banks of the Euphrates dispute with those of the Nile the merit of having invented and cultivated astronomy. Vast extended plains, open on all sides, where the eye discovered a boundless horizon, invited to the contemplation and study of the heavens. The temple of Belus, renowned in Babylon, inclosed in its centre an elevated tower, more antient than the temple, erected for the purpose of astronomical observations. Callisthenes is said to have sent Aristotle a collection of these observations, including the space of one thousand nine hundred and three years. But this fact, first mentioned by Porphyry, is not taken notice of by historians who lived near the time of Alexander's conquests. On the contrary, Epigenes, whom Pliny quotes with respect, and who flourished in the reign of Augustus, affirms, that the astronomical observations of the Chaldeans did not go higher than seven hundred and twenty years.

Although they cultivated astronomy chiefly for the purposes of judicial astrology, yet they made considerable progress in this study. They taught that the moon is placed below all the stars, and below all the planets; that it is nearer the earth, and performs its revolution in less time, by reason of the

smaller

smaller extent of its orbit. They knew that the moon shone with a borrowed light, and that its eclipses were caused by its immerging into the shadow of the earth *.

The Chaldeans reckoned thirty-six constellations; twelve in the zodiac, and twenty-four without that circle. They divided each sign of the zodiac into thirty degrees, and each degree into sixty parts or minutes. The invention of sun-dials, is ascribed to them by Herodotus †: they attempted to measure the length of the sun's annual revolution; and in the reign of Nabonassar, their year consisted of three hundred and sixty-five days. We are informed by Strabo, that they afterwards added five hours and some minutes to the annual revolution of the sun; but the epocha of this discovery is unknown.

The Chaldean system concerning comets, though merely conjectural, is amusing to curiosity. Apollonius Mindus, who studied among these astronomers, informs us, that they regarded comets as planets, whose revolutions were performed in orbits very eccentric to the earth, and that these stars became visible only in their progress through the lower part of that orbit. They pretended also to know the course of the comets, and the duration of their periods. Pliny and Plutarch refer also to these opinions of the Chaldeans. This theory, however, like the true system of the universe, which Pythagoras learned in Egypt, and which prevailed among some of the eastern nations, was merely a fortunate conjecture, and arose from chance and uncertainty, not from study and observation. The antients had made little progress in ascertaining the phenomena, or explaining the principles of astronomy; and so imperfect was their theory of the heavenly bodies, that they could

* Diodor. lib. ii. p. 144. † Lib. ii.

not

not even foretel the eclipses of the sun and moon *. Their incapacity for this, now one of the easiest acquisitions in the science, discovers no accurate or extensive knowledge of the celestial phenomena. It is probable too, that some of the discoveries, ascribed to them in the earlier ages of their history, were acquired at a later period. Notwithstanding the conquest of Babylon by Cyrus, and afterwards by Alexander the Great, the Chaldeans were still held in high respect and estimation, on account of the remarkable prepossession of the antients in favour of their skill in judicial astronomy. The destruction of the Babylonish empire, did not prevent the Chaldeans from perfecting their astronomical discoveries; and Diodorus, from whom these details are chiefly taken, was not acquainted with this eastern school of astronomy till the reign of Augustus Cæsar.

These sciences were cultivated among the Babylonians at an early period. The immense works which rendered antient Babylon a scene of wonders, give us a high idea of the proficiency of its inhabitants in mechanics; and it is impossible to carry mechanics to a certain degree of perfection without the aid of geometry. The ingenious and stupendous structures executed at Babylon, furnish a proof that these studies were familiar to its inhabitants. The imagination of travellers has, probably, exaggerated in describing the height of the walls, the temple of Belus, and the hanging-gardens; but the bridge built over the Euphrates, the lake and canals dug by human industry, to distribute the waters of that river, which have been described by historians who had beheld Babylon in its splendour, and carefully examined its curiosities, demonstrate the progress which this people had made in the knowledge

* Diodor. lib. ii. p. 145.

of geometrical science, and of the mechanic powers. The bridge, reckoned one of the most wonderful works of the East, was near a hundred fathoms in length, and almost four in breadth. Much art and labour were necessary in laying the foundations of such a structure in the bed of a deep and rapid river, which rolls along a prodigious quantity of mud, and whose bottom is sandy. Many precautions were necessary to be taken in order to secure the piers of the bridge of Babylon. They were built of stones joined and fastened together with cramps of iron, and their joints filled with melted lead. The front of the piers, which turned towards the current of the Euphrates, was defended by buttresses extremely advanced, which diminished the weight and force of the water by dividing it at a distance.

The snows of the Armenian mountains, which dissolve at the approach of summer, cause the Euphrates to overflow its banks. These violent floods, in early times, laid all the lands of Babylon under water during the months of June, July, and August. To remedy the evils, and retain the benefit of these inundations, they formed two canals above the city, which carried off the redundant waters into the Tigris before they reached Babylon; and to secure the country still more, they contrived means to confine the Euphrates within its banks. To effect this, they built on each side of the river a high dyke, and of great extent, lined with bricks cemented with bitumen. As the Euphrates might swell so considerably as to surmount these dykes; to prevent this disorder, they contrived proper openings along all its banks to give free vent to the waters.

The Euphrates traversed Babylon from north to south. Beside the bridge which I have already described, Herodotus informs us, that a secret gallery was dug beneath the bed of the Euphrates, twenty

feet

feet high and fifteen broad. It served for a communication between the two palaces, which were built facing each other on the opposite sides of the river.

These works could not have been carried into execution without turning aside the course of the Euphrates. This was effected not only by making many drains from that river, but also by digging above Babylon an immense bason to contain a part of its waters. When these operations were finished, the Euphrates was introduced to its ordinary channel, but the bason remained. This vast reservoir, which communicated with the river by a canal, was designed for two uses: to receive the superfluous waters of the Euphrates during the time of the inundations; and to preserve them for the purpose of watering the grounds in convenient seasons, as by means of sluices they could draw off the quantity of water which they judged necessary. In short, the lake of Babylon served for the same purposes as the lake Mœris in Egypt. The dimensions of it cannot be accurately ascertained, as the antients exaggerate on this subject, and differ from each other.

The labours of the Babylonians to improve their country was not limited to this single enterprise: They multiplied canals through their lands, and diffused the Euphrates through the kingdom, in the same manner as the Nile was distributed in Egypt. Other advantages were gained: the impetuosity of the Euphrates was diminished, by compelling the river to take many turns, and the access to Babylon was rendered difficult by water.

These ingenious and useful enterprises are sufficient to shew that the mathematical sciences were successfully cultivated among the Babylonians. A people who had skill to level, to restrain, and direct such a river as the Euphrates, must have made some progress in geometry and mechanics.

The

The art of sculpture appears to have been much practised among the Babylonians. The Scripture mentions a golden statue, sixty cubits in height, and six in breadth, erected by the orders of Nebuchadnezzar; and alludes to many other representations of divinities and princes, which filled the temples and palaces of Babylon. The elegance and correctness of their artists in works of this nature may reasonably be called in question: if we may judge from such of their monuments as have escaped the injuries of time; like the rest of the Asiatics, they never knew how to design with taste and precision. The figures which appear on the remains of their bas-reliefs, are clumsy and incorrect, without attitude, grace, or variety of expression. In the ruins of Persepolis, commonly supposed to be the remains of a palace built by the first sovereigns of Persia, the statues and ornaments, which are yet to be seen, are of the worst taste, and the meanest execution; yet they appear to have been executed in a superior style to that of the antient sculptors of Babylon. The palaces of Persepolis and Susa were built by artists whom Cambyses transported out of Egypt into Persia, after he had subjected that empire *. From this circumstance we may safely infer, that he esteemed the artists of Babylon incapable of executing the grand and magnificent projects which he had conceived.

In other branches of art the Babylonians appear to have excelled, particularly in the foundry of metals: this appears from the prodigious number of statues of gold, silver, and bronze, which decorated the temples of Babylon. Their skill in the manufactures of the loom, particularly in works of em-

* Diodor. lib. i. p. 55.

broidery, is celebrated by antiquity: and from the luxury and magnificence in which their kings, princes, and great men lived, it is natural to conclude, that they had carried many of the arts to a considerable degree of perfection in the brilliant ages of their monarchy. To what degree of excellence they carried their musick, is uncertain; but from Daniel we learn, that they had a variety of musical instruments, such as flutes, cornets, harps, sackbuts, psalteries, and dulcimers. Their language was a dialect of the Syriac, and the same alphabet was common to both.

The trade of this antient people appears to have been considerable, especially when Babylon was in the meridian of her glory. Situated in the centre of the old world, this city had an easy communication with the western and northern regions by means of the Euphrates and the Tigris, and with the eastern by means of the Persian gulf. As it was not only the seat of a potent monarchy, but also afforded many productions and manufactures of its own to exchange with its neighbours, it is not to be doubted but that its commerce was extensive. We may conclude also, that they had shipping of their own, and were addicted to navigation, since their capital is styled by the prophet, "A city of waters."

The Asiatics have always been distinguished by a strong inclination for pomp, luxury, and effeminacy. The Babylonians were much addicted to these vices in the later periods of their monarchy, when, rising on the ruins of Nineveh, and enriched with the spoils of the East, they swayed without a rival the sceptre of Asia. They indulged in the pleasures of the table, which they carried to excess, and were addicted to intoxication. The banquet which Belshazzar gave to a thousand of his lords, on the eve of the taking of Babylon, when his wives and concubines were admitted to the entertainment, suffices to give

give us an idea of the dissolute licentiousness which prevailed in these repasts.

They affected ornament and finery in their dress. Their under-garment was a linen vest, which descended in the eastern mode to their feet. Over this they cast a woollen robe, and then wrapped themselves in a white mantle or cloak. They let their hair grow long, and their heads were adorned with a tiara or turban. They wore a seal-ring on the finger, and in the hand a staff finely fashioned, on the top of which there was a rose, a lily, a pomegranate, an eagle, or some other elegant figure, curiously engraved.

This was the general dress, but the opulent and the noble adorned their persons with the most superb magnificence. Not satisfied with stuffs of gold and silver, embellished with the finest dyes and the most precious embroidery, they loaded them with the additional ornaments of rubies, emeralds, sapphires, pearls, and other jewels, which have always been the production of the East. Collars of gold, and pendants of precious stones at the ears, formed also a part of their finery *.

Together with the gaudy decorations of dress, the Babylonians delighted in the luxury of perfumes, and had refined so much on this voluptuous indulgence, that the perfume of Babylon was renowned and coveted among the antients.

With regard to the external magnificence, or internal ornaments of their buildings, it is difficult to determine: probably, in the dwellings of private life, simplicity and œconomy prevailed; but there is every reason to believe, that pomp and splendour shone in the palaces of the satrapes, and other persons of distinction in the court of Babylon.

* Herod. lib. i. Strabo, lib. xvi. Plin. lib. viii. sect. 74.

In the interior decorations of their apartments they displayed the same taste, which is still cultivated by the Orientals; their chief luxury consisted in rich carpets, and ornamental coverings for chairs and beds. The value of one of these carpets, wove in the looms of Babylon, amounted, according to Pliny, to eighty-one thousand sestertia*. The sacred writers mention the different vessels of ivory, marble, and brass, studded with precious stones, which adorned their apartments. These facts evince the taste of the Babylonians for richness and magnificence of apparel and luxury.

Cars or chariots, employed in war, were in universal use among the antients, whether barbarous or beginning to be civilized; but to effeminacy, the perpetual concomitant of luxury, we may attribute the invention of litters or palanquins, which were first known in Babylon. The facility and convenience of this vehicle could not escape a voluptuous people, who courted indulgence and luxury in every possible direction.

In the midst of their luxurious refinements, the original character of the nation was not forgotten, and hunting was among their favourite amusements. So much were they devoted to this exercise, that paintings of the chace were selected to decorate their apartments, and were even embroidered on their clothes and their furniture.

As an exception to the general maxims and established customs of Asia, the women were not shut up in seraglios, and secluded from the society of men: it appears, on the contrary, that they were admitted to public feasts; allowed to converse with strangers, and to eat with them †. At the same time, the women were under the care of eunuchs; a

* Plin. lib. vii. sect. 74.

† Dan. ch. v. ver. 2. Quint. Curt. lib. v. cap. 1.

con-

contradiction in manners, to be found in the histor of antient as well as of modern nations. Notwith standing the propensity of the Babylonians to luxur and voluptuousness, all antiquity has given testi mony to their valour and military talents. Xenophon, an unquestionable judge, affirms, that the East produced no better soldiers than those of Chaldea.

From this description it will appear, that the Babylonians, during the shining periods of their history, blended a degree of polish and refinement with valour and military talents; that, amidst their luxury and effeminacy, they never entirely abandoned the character, and even the ferocity, of their ancestors; and in every age of their empire were addicted to that superstition and credulity which seem to form the basis of the Oriental character.—I have dwelt the longer on the history of this people, as Babylon was the cradle of Asiatic elegance and arts, and exhibited the first examples of that refinement and luxury which have been repeated during every subsequent age in the annals of the East.

CHAP. V.

Of the MEDES *and* PERSIANS.

MEDIA was bounded on the north by part of the Caspian sea; on the south by Persis, Susiana, and Assyria; on the east by Parthia and Hyrcania; and on the west by Armenia Major. In antient times it was divided into several provinces; but by a later division these were reduced to two, Media Magna and Atropatene.

The

The latter contained that part which lay between Mount Taurus and the Caspian sea, so called from Atropatus, who being governor of this province in the time of Darius, withstood Alexander the Great, and transmitted the country to his posterity, who held it in the time of Strabo. This tract was inhabited by the Cadusians and Caspians, a barbarous race, originally sprung from the Scythians. Its chief cities were Gaza, Tazina, and Cyropolis. To the south-east lay Media Magna, in which stood Ecbatana, Laodicea, Apamea, and Arsacia. According to the most probable opinion, Tauris is the antient and celebrated Ecbatana, though no magnificent ruins are discovered in its neighbourhood.

The northern parts of Media, lying between the Caspian mountains and the sea, are cold and barren, the snow lying on the hills nine months in the year. The southern parts produce all sorts of grain in abundance, and are so delightful to the eye, that the country bordering on Tauris is called the Garden of Persia. In this region there are extensive plains; among which, that of Nysa is celebrated by the antients, for the numerous stalls of horses that were kept in it for the Persian monarchs. The climate in the northern parts is cold and inhospitable, owing to the vapours that rise from the Caspian sea, and to the marshes which abound in the uncultivated wilds. The southern provinces enjoy a temperate and salutaryamosp there, though subject to heavy rains and violent tempests in the spring and autumn. Besides the cattle, and game of all sorts, which the inland provinces produce, some of them are distinguished for the excellence and variety of their wines, especially in the neighbourhood of Tauris, where no fewer than sixty different kinds of grapes are cultivated with success.

The Caspian sea, which is the northern boundary

of Media, was but imperfectly known to the antients, and even to the modern geographers before the discoveries made in the beginning of this century by M. Vanvorden, who, by order of Peter the Great, formed an exact chart of this sea, from observations made on the spot. Ptolemy computed that it extended from east to west twenty-three degrees and a half; though it is now ascertained to be less than four. This sea receives the great river Wolga, and near two hundred smaller streams, into its channel, and yet is never greatly augmented or diminished, nor observed to ebb or flow. From its being constantly full, and from the taste and colour of its waters, which are the same with those of the ocean, it has been supposed that it enjoys a subterraneous communication with the Baltic, or the Persian gulf, which are situated in its neighbourhood.

Upon the dismemberment of the first Assyrian empire, as I have already mentioned, the Medes threw off the yoke. They did not immediately form themselves into monarchical government, but remained for some time in a state of anarchy. Harassed with internal dissensions and domestic calamities, they resolved to establish civil government, and to elect a king. During the times of confusion and disorder, Dejoces had become the arbiter of the district in which he lived, and had acquired reputation and renown over the whole country, by the wisdom of his regulations, and the justice of his decisions. Pretending to decline the sovereignty, to which he was destined by the public voice, he secured it the more; and anarchy renewing the antient disorders, a general assembly of the nation was called, and he was unanimously elected king.

The new sovereign being established on his throne, conducted himself in such a manner, as to secure his own dignity, and justify the choice of the nation.

He commanded his subjects to build him a magnificent palace, and he demanded guards for the security of his person. The Medes obeyed. The palace was raised, and surrounded with fortifications; and his life-guards were chosen by himself.

Having taken proper measures to give dignity as well as security to the throne, he began to establish such civil and political regulations as might promote the welfare of his subjects. Before his accession to the throne, the Medes had lived in scattered villages, remote and separate from each other. He united the several districts, which had been divided during the anarchy; he commanded them to build a city, and to fortify it against the attacks of an enemy. He chose a situation in which art had only to assist nature. Ecbatana was built, and encompassed with seven walls, the inmost of which inclosed the palace of the king, where his treasures were deposited.

Having reclaimed his subjects from their barbarous life, and assembled them in cities, he appointed laws and institutions to maintain order throughout his dominions, to accustom his subjects to discipline, and to refine their manners. The character of the nation for ferocity and disorder suggested to him the necessity or policy of inspiring a reverence for his person, and surrounding the royal dignity with imaginary terrors. Accordingly he affected that state of distant majesty, which has been so general among the Eastern princes. Access to his presence was prohibited, except to those who were introduced with the forms of solemnity, by ministers appointed for the purpose. No person was permitted to look him in the face, or to smile in his presence. All affairs were managed by the interposition of deputies. But though concealed from the eyes of his subjects, he had emissaries in all the provinces, who

 informed

informed him of every transaction; and saw, from the centre of his palace, whatever passed in his dominions. Hence no crime escaped the knowledge of the prince or the rigour of the law*.

To give solemnity to judicial proceedings, litigations and law-suits were carried on in writing, and sentence notified to the parties in the same manner. He applied himself strictly to the administration of justice, and asserted the authority of the laws, by severe and rigorous punishments. In the infancy of government, and among a rude people, the sword of justice must be shown, as well as its balance; and seasonable severity against atrocious offenders is the most enlarged and liberal humanity.

But although Dejoces may be justified for having taken necessary precautions to support an authority yet in its infancy, and to establish order in a turbulent age, history cannot vindicate him for having drawn a veil between himself and his subjects, and having consulted, by his regulations, the splendour of the sovereign, rather than the happiness of the people.

Dejoces reigned fifty-three years, and transmitted his sceptre to his son Phraortes, who is called Arphaxad in Scripture. This prince being of a warlike disposition, invaded the Persians, whom he subdued; and conquered the greater part of Upper Asia, between mount Taurus and the river Halys. Having over-run a part of Assyria, he laid siege to Nineveh; but here his good fortune forsaking him, he perished with the greater part of his army, after having reigned twenty-two years.

Cyaxares, the son and successor of Phraortes, having established himself on the throne, raised a powerful army to revenge the death of his father, by the destruction of Nineveh. The Assyrians oppo-

* Herodot. lib. i. p. 99.

sed

sed him on the frontiers; but being defeated, fled to Nineveh, which was immediately besieged by the conqueror. Cyaxares was soon obliged to withdraw his troops from the siege, in order to defend his own dominions against a mighty army of Scythians, which rushing like an impetuous torrent from the Palus Mœotis, made an irruption into the Median territories. The two armies engaged, and the Medes were vanquished. The barbarians finding no other obstacle in their way, over-ran not only Media, but the greater part of Upper Asia, and extending their conquest to Syria, hovered on the frontiers of Egypt. To prevent their destructive progress into his dominions, Psammeticus, the Egyptian monarch, mitigated their fury, and gratified their avarice, by entreaties and presents.

After the Scythians had continued masters of Upper Asia for twenty-eight years, Cyaxares, finding himself unable to expel them by force of arms, contrived to destroy them by a treacherous stratagem. A general feast was celebrated, to which the Scythians were invited; the masters of families having inebriated their guests, massacred them in that condition, and delivered the kingdom from its oppressors. The Medes repossessed themselves of the provinces which they had lost, and once more extended their empire to the banks of the Halys, their antient boundary to the west.

Cyaxares having entered into an alliance with Nebuchadnezzar, which he cemented by giving him his daughter in marriage, joined his forces to those of the Babylonians, and resumed the siege of Nineveh. After a long defence, the confederated armies took the city, and levelled it with the ground. The destruction of this capital laid the foundation of the two collateral empires of the Medes and Babylonians, which rose on the ruins of the Assyrian monarchy.

After the reduction of Nineveh, Cyaxares carried his victorious arms to Armenia, Pontus, Cappadocia, Persis, and Susiana, and annexed them to his dominions. Having erected the kingdom of Media into a powerful empire, he died in the fortieth year of his reign, and left this rich partition of Asia to his son Astyages.

This prince, who is supposed to be the Ahasuerus of the Jews, gave his daughter Mandanè in marriage to Cambyses a Persian; from which union, according to the most probable accounts, Cyrus descended, the founder of the Persian monarchy. From this period the history of the Medes becomes blended with that of the Persians.

Antient Persia extended in length from the Hellespont to the mouth of the river Indus, about two thousand eight hundred miles; and in breadth, from Pontus to the Arabian gulf, about two thousand. Gedrosia, now called Makran; Caramania, which contains the modern provinces of Chirman and Ormas; Drangiana, now named Sigestan; Parapamisus, to which the modern Persians give the appellation of Sablestan; Bactriana, at present called Charassan; Margiana, now Esterabad; Hyrcania, whose capital still retains its antient name; Parthia, which incloses Ispahan, the metropolis of modern Persia; Persis, now Pars; and Susiana, now Chasistan, whose celebrated city of Susa, or Shushan, was once the seat of Oriental sovereignty; are the chief provinces of an empire, which, in antient times, obtained the dominion of Asia, and threatened the destiny of Europe. According to Chardin, there are computed in the dominions of Persia upwards of five hundred considerable cities, walled towns, and castles, about sixty thousand villages, and forty millions of inhabitants.

From the vast extent of this country, the air and climate partake of great variety; some regions being frozen

frozen with cold, and others scorched with heat, at the same season of the year. Along the coasts of the Persian gulf and the Indian ocean, the heat, during four months of the year, is so excessive as to be intolerable to the natives, who at these seasons forsake their habitations on the plains, and retire to the mountains. The eastern provinces, and even the northern, on the coasts of the Caspian sea, are subject, like the southern, to insupportable heats, attended with moisture, and noxious to the inhabitants. The people here also retire about the beginning of summer to the coolness of the mountains, sometimes to the distance of thirty leagues from the sea; and though their country, from October to May, be extremely beautiful and pleasant, yet they carry in their countenance indelible marks of the malignant influence of their summers, being tinctured with a sickly yellow, and destitute of spirits or strength. The humidity of the air is found only in the northern regions; for the other provinces of Asia enjoy a dry atmosphere, the sky being perfectly serene, and seldom spotted with a cloud. The natives derive from this purity of the element a clear and florid complexion, together with an excellent habit of body. Though it seldom rains, the heats are mitigated by periodical breezes, which spring up at night and last till morning.

The winter, in these places, is severe and rigorous; the snow falls in great flakes on the mountains, but never covers the plains. In some mountainous regions, west from Ispahan, the snow lies eight months in the year. The dryness of the atmosphere exempts Persia from thunder; but hail frequently falls in the spring, and is fatal to the fruits of the earth. The winds seldom swell into storms or tempests, but on the southern coasts they are often sickly and infectious.

tious *. People often find themselves struck by a south wind (says Tavernier) in such a manner, that they cry, "I burn;" and immediately fall down dead. Le Brun felt the noxious influence of these sultry climates, and was informed by the inhabitants, that the weather was sometimes so excessively hot as to melt the seals of letters.

No country in the world is more mountainous than Persia; but these ranges of mountains which figure on the map, are not blest with the bounty of Nature, as most of them contain no metals, nor even give birth to springs, and only a few of them are shaded with wood: those situated on the frontiers serve as a kind of natural ramparts or bulwarks to this vast empire. In this class are the mountains of Caucasus and Ararat, in modern times called the mountains of Daghestan, which fill all the space between the Euxine and Caspian seas. Taurus, and its several branches, run through Persia from Natolia to India, and occupy the middle regions of this extensive kingdom.

None of the rivers are navigable except the Araxis; the other streams are diminished by being cut into many channels to water the grounds. This was practised formerly much more than of late years; and hence, in a great measure, arises the mighty difference between the productions of antient and modern Persia. These channels are daily lessening; for Tavernier was informed by a Persian nobleman, that within the space of twenty-four years, no fewer than eighty channels had been choaked up in the territory of Tauris.

From the few and inconsiderable rivers, and the great number of mountains without springs, it may be concluded that the soil cannot be generally rich

* Chardin, tom. iii.

or

or fruitful. The valleys, however, are fertile and luxuriant; but the earth is every where so dry, that it produces nothing without being watered. The scanty rains are not sufficient to keep the best lands in a state of cultivation without the assistance of art. The oppressive government of the Mahommedan princes, and the want of industry among the inhabitants, are the principal causes that the barren aspect of this country at present does not correspond to the luxuriant descriptions of the antient historians *.

In the variety, excellence, and beauty of its vegetable productions, Persia exceeds other countries. The plantane, the willow, the fir, the cornel, the almond-tree, and the wild chestnut, are found in the woods. Trees which produce gums, mastich, incense, and manna, are common to Persia. Most of the European vegetables flourish here in great perfection; and their aromatic herbs are famed all over the East. The finest and most delicious fruits which have been transplanted to Europe, which are reared with industry in the garden, and matured with artificial heat, are scattered here in profusion by the hand of Nature. Melons, grapes, dates of the palm-trees, and peaches, grow here in the greatest abundance, particularly in Bactria, which may be looked upon as the garden of the East. Chardin informs us, that at an entertainment near Ispahan, he saw fifty different kinds of fruit provided for a dessert.

No grain is cultivated here except wheat, barley, and millet, which grow to an uncommon size, and are of a peculiar excellence. Rice is the chief aliment of the people, as over all the East.

All the finer flowers which are known to the Europeans, and many which are unknown, spring

* Q. Curtius. Ammian. Marcellin.

 spontaneously

spontaneously in Persia. For several months the whole country is covered with them, as with a rich carpet of the most vivid and glowing colours. The roses are of peculiar beauty, and the same bush often produces them of three different colours.

Metals of all kinds, except gold and silver, have been found in Persia since the reign of Abbas the Great: their richest mines are those of the turquoise, called by the Persians phirouze.

The horses of Persia, next to those of Arabia, are the most beautiful in the East. Camels are so numerous, and in such frequent use, that they are called the land-ships; and it is by means of these living vehicles that their inland trade is carried on.

The feathered tribes which are familiar to Europe, are found here, but not in profusion. The partridges, which seem to be natives of this country, are the largest in the world, and equal the size of our fowls. They have many birds of song, which are unknown in our woods; and the voice of the nightingale is heard the whole year round. Birds of prey abound in this country, and falconry is not only practised by the nobles, but even by the peasants.

The natural history of a country cannot be uninteresting, which produced Cyrus, the most distinguished hero of the East; gave origin to the second of the four great monarchies; and operated a revolution not only in Asia, but in the world.

Nothing is known concerning the history or state of the Persians previous to the time of Cyrus. It is probable that they were tributary to the Assyrians and Medes; but the throne was still filled with princes of their own nation. The only great family we find upon record is that of Achæmenes, which must indeed have been illustrious, since Xerxes, when in the career of conquest, and at the height of his

his glory, was proud to derive his pedigree from that original *. Achæmenes was the grandfather of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian empire, and the first of its kings.

Mandanè, the daughter of Astyages, king of the Medes, was the mother of this prince; his father was either king of Persia, or a personage of the first distinction in that country. The Persians at this time consisted of twelve small tribes, and inhabited only a province of that extensive empire, afterwards known by the name of Persia. The whole nation at that time could number no more than a hundred and twenty thousand men. Afterwards, when by the wisdom and valour of Cyrus they had obtained the empire of the East, the name of Persia enlarged with their fortunes, and comprehended all that vast tract which extends between east and west from the river Indus to the Tigris, and between north and south from the Caspian sea to the ocean. The hardy inhabitants of these mountainous regions held the same superiority over the enervated possessors of the rich Asiatic plains, which is still observed in the sultry climates of the East †, and wanted only such a general as Cyrus to lead them on to victory and dominion.

This prince was beautiful in his person, but more engaging by the qualities of his mind. He was educated according to the severe discipline of the Persians; but when he was twelve years of age, he went with his mother Mandanè to visit his grandfather Astyages. During his residence at the court of Ecbatana, he gained the affections of the Medes by his obliging disposition, his generosity, and his heroic spirit. At the age of sixteen he distinguished himself in the field, against the prince of Babylon,

* Herodot. lib. vii.

† Orm. Hist. Indostan.

who had invaded the Median territories; and displayed the first specimens of that valour which afterwards conducted him to the empire of Asia. Returning to Persia in the following season, he remained there till the fortieth year of his age, when he was recalled to the assistance of his uncle Cyaxares, who upon the death of Astyages, had succeeded to the throne of Media.

The combination of the Medes and Persians alarmed the fears and excited the jealousy of Neriglissar, king of Babylon. Accordingly he sent ambassadors to the Lydians, Phrygians, Carians, Capadocians, Paphlagonians, and Cilicians, imploring their aid against a new power, which threatened the tranquillity and meditated the subjugation of all Asia. As the subsequent events prepared the way for the establishment of a greater empire than history has hitherto recorded, it is requisite to deliver them in a detail, and to describe those nations of the Lesser Asia, whose vicinity to Greece, or connection with its inhabitants, gave rise to the celebrated wars between the Greeks and Persians.

From the earliest periods of time, the people of Asia Minor were distinguished by the same manners, and spoke the same language, as the Greeks. They had therefore a common origin. But opulence and the arts were earlier known in Asia Minor than in Greece. A multitude of petty kingdoms was established, of whom no remembrance remains; but the Phrygians, Lydians, and Trojans, are well known, and their progress in the arts and in luxury appears to have been considerable. Before the Trojan war, Phrygia was celebrated among the Greeks for its riches. Midas, the second Phrygian king, is said to have turned every thing that he touched into gold; a metaphorical expression intended to denote the skill of this prince in improving the

the productions of his country, and his attention to make trade flourish in his dominions. This conjecture appears the more probable, as Midas was particularly attached to the improvement of navigation. He is said to have invented the anchor, by which ships are stopt in their course *. The Phrygians were regarded for some time as masters of the sea; a superiority which none but trading nations could enjoy.

Lydia was no less famed for its opulence, industry, and improvement. In this province stands the mountain Tmolus, antiently abounding with gold, which the river Pactolus brought down from the craggy summits. At the foot of this mountain, and on the banks of the Pactolus, the town of Sardis early rose to importance, and became the capital of Lydia. Improving the natural advantages of their country, the Lydians became opulent and flourishing. They were the first people of antiquity who are known to have exercised retail trades, and the first who struck coins of gold and silver †. Opulence is naturally attended with ambition; and while the people became enriched by their industry, the monarchs extended their dominions eastward, as far as the river Halys. In the neighbourhood of such a dangerous power, the Grecian colonies could not preserve their independence. Gyges led an army against them, and the power of the Lydian kingdom, exerted with perseverance, was too great for these little commonwealths to resist. Ardyes, son of Gyges, took Miletus and Priene.

A Cimmerian horde having over-run Asia Minor, attacked Sardis, and suspended for a time the progress of the Lydians; but this evil was transitory,

* Pausan. lib. i.

† Herodot. lib. i. cap. 35. 74. 93, 94.

the kingdom revived with new lustre under the reign of Crœsus, who increased the power and extended the territories which he received from his ancestors. He made all the Asian Greeks tributary; and, excepting Lycia and Cilicia, was master of the whole of Asia Minor, as far as the river Halys. Distinguished by his virtues as well as abilities, he was no less beloved than feared; and the Asian Greeks became attached to him as subjects to their legal hereditary sovereign. He appears to have been partial to the Greeks, and encouraged men of genius and learning of that nation to frequent his court; but he was not destitute of ambition and the love of conquest. Being master of the whole western coast of Asia Minor, with all its shipping, he had the means of establishing a more formidable naval power than had yet been known in the world. Already the islands trembled for their independency; and Greece itself was not without apprehension, when the ambassadors from the king of Babylon arrived, and solicited his aid to check the progress of the Medes and Persians, who had defeated the Assyrian army, and threatened the entire conquest of that empire. Crœsus, alarmed at the growing power and fame of Cyrus, adopted the obvious policy to support the Assyrian monarch, and to endeavour to hold the balance between him and the Persians.

When both parties had been employed for three years in forming alliances, and making preparations for war, the confederated armies took the field. After a fierce engagement, Neriglissar, the king of Babylon, was slain, the Assyrian army was routed, and victory declared for Cyrus. On the death of Neriglissar, Crœsus, king of Lydia, being next in dignity, took the command of the vanquished army, and attempted to conduct them in safety from the field: but Cyrus overtook them in their flight, dispersed

persed them in great disorder, and obtained possession of their camp; chiefly by the assistance of the Hyrcanians, who had revolted to him on the preceding night. Crœsus fled to Lydia. Cyrus reserved to himself all the horses that were taken, in order to form a body of cavalry for the Persian army, which hitherto they had wanted. The richest and most valuable part of the booty he set apart for Cyaxares, and having obtained a promise from the prisoners not to appear any more in arms against him, or his allies, he allowed them to return to their respective countries.

Labynetus, the Belshazzar of Scripture, succeeded to the throne of Babylon nine months after the death of Neriglissar. While this weak and indolent prince consumed his days in luxury and pleasure, his mother Nitocris, a woman of an excellent understanding and a masculine spirit*, assumed the cares of the government, and took every proper precaution to defend the country, and fortify the capital against the victorious Medes. Cyaxares arriving at the camp of Cyrus; after various consultations, it was resolved to conduct the war in future in besieging the fortresses, and taking the towns, in order to make themselves masters of the country. Accordingly they reduced many cities, and several entire provinces, without much resistance from the Babylonians. Alarmed with the progress of their conquests, Labynetus went with a great part of his treasures to Crœsus, king of Lydia, by whose assistance and influence he raised a formidable confederacy against the Medes and Persians; and having a numerous army of Egyptians, Greeks, Thrasians, and the nations of Lesser Asia, he appointed Crœsus to be their general, and ordered them to invade Media.

* Herodot. lib. i.

Cyrus

Cyrus being informed of these vast preparations by one of his confidents, who, by his consent, had gone over to the enemy as a deserter, took leave of Cyaxares, who remained in Media with a third part of the troops; marched forwards to meet the confederated forces in their own territories, and disconcert their measures by the boldness of his undertaking. One great battle decided the fate of Crœsus and of Lydia. Cyrus was victorious, and, pursuing the advantages of his victory, marched immediately to Sardis, took Crœsus prisoner, and made his kingdom a province of the Persian empire.

After the conquest of Lydia, Cyrus continued in Lesser Asia till he had reduced to subjection the different nations that inhabited its territories, from the Egean sea to the Euphrates. From thence he marched into Syria and Arabia, which submitted to his authority. After having established tranquillity in the provinces of Upper Asia, he again entered Assyria, and proceeded to Babylon. Labynetus ventured to try the fate of a battle; but being defeated, retired into his capital, which was immediately besieged by Cyrus. The siege of this important place, the metropolis of Asia, was an enterprise of great difficulty. The walls were high and impregnable; the number of men to defend them was great; the city was furnished with provisions for twenty years *, and there was a great extent of ground within the walls appropriated to tillage and pasturage. Cyrus, however, not discouraged with these difficulties, prosecuted his design, and perceiving it to be impracticable to take the place by storm, he caused a line of circumvallation to be drawn round the city, with a large and deep ditch; and that his troops might not be over-fatigued, di-

* Herodot. lib. i. Cyropæd. lib. vii. Q. Curt. lib. v. cap. 1.

vided

vided his army into twelve bodies, and assigned each of them its month, to guard the workmen at the trenches. The besieged, thinking themselves protected from danger and from famine by their high walls and their magazines, insulted Cyrus from the ramparts, and derided his efforts as unprofitable labour.

Two years having been consumed in ineffectual operations, Cyrus at length contrived a stratagem, which, with little difficulty, made him master of Babylon. Being informed that an annual festival was approaching, at which the Babylonians were accustomed to spend the whole night in rioting and drunkenness, he seized the favourable opportunity to attack the city. On the approach of the appointed day, he sent a strong detachment to the head of the canal leading to the great lake, which was dug for receiving the superfluous waters of the river, with orders to break down the great dam between the lake and the canal, and to divert the whole current into the lake. At the same time he stationed one division of his troops at the place where the river ran into Babylon, and another where it came out; ordering them to enter the city by its channel, whenever they should find it fordable. Towards the evening he opened the head of the trenches on both sides of the river above the city, to discharge the waters. By these means, and the breaking down of the great dam, the river was soon drained, so that by midnight the two bodies of troops entered the channel, the one conducted by Gobrias, the other by Gadates, Babylonian nobles who had revolted to Cyrus. Finding the gates that separated the streets from the river left open by negligence, occasioned by the general riot, the united parties entered the city without opposition, and surprizing the guards, put them to death. Those within the palace opening the gates to know the cause

cause of the tumult, the Persians rushed in, and attacking the king, who met them in arms, slew him with his nobles around him. Cyrus became master of Babylon, and concluded his conquests after a war of twenty-one years; during which he had subdued all the nations of the East, from the Egean sea to the river Indus, and erected the greatest empire that had been ever known in the world.

This account of the taking of Babylon, which I have taken from Herodotus and Xenophon, is confirmed by sacred Scripture. The book of Daniel informs us, that Belshazzar made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, for his wives, and concubines: at this entertainment, having prepared the gold and silver vessels which were taken from the temple of Jerusalem, by ordering them to be brought to the banqueting-house, and making libations from them to his false gods, the wrath of Heaven was declared against the impious king. A hand appeared on the wall, and wrote the sentence of his immediate destruction. The prophet Daniel explained the characters of destiny to the astonished monarch; "That his days were numbered; that his kingdom was departed from him, and given to the Medes and Persians." Immediately the palace was taken, and Belshazzar slain.

Cyrus employed the remaining years of his reign in consolidating the conquests which he had made, and modelling the numerous nations which acknowledged his authority into one regular empire. We have neither certain nor complete information concerning the transactions of this illustrious prince, either in war or peace: but upon the whole it appears, that his humanity was equal to his valour; and that his laws and political institutions were marked by the same superiority of genius which conducted him to conquest. The father of the

Persian

Persian empire received the congratulations of the conquered as well as the conquerors; and his name is celebrated in the poems of Greece, the annals of Asia, and the records of inspiration. The vast and extensive dominions which were gained by his valour, and established by his wisdom, stood on the strength of this original basis for two hundred years, notwithstanding the rash and improvident conduct of his successors.

CHAP. VI.

CYRUS was succeeded by his son Cambyses. This rash and extravagant prince discovered all the vices which absolute power engenders, and disgraced the throne which his father had filled with so much lustre. The first event of his reign was a war against the Egyptians. From the time of Sesostris to that of Psammeticus, that is, for more than nine hundred years, Egypt furnishes few transactions for the historic page. Not that this kingdom had suffered any fatal catastrophe, or considerable diminution. We learn from Homer *, that in the time of the Trojan war, Egypt was flourishing. The sacred Scriptures suggest the same idea of it, in the time of Solomon and his successors. The Egyptian monarchs appear to have been always of great political importance. They interfered frequently in the affairs of Arabia and Palestine; and had transactions in war and in peace with Assyria. But a vast desert divided the two monarchies, and the countries disputed by their arms were on the frontier, and far distant from the seat of empire. During, there-

* Odyss. lib. iv.

fore,

fore, a period of tranquillity seldom interrupted, Egypt cultivated science and the arts; and under Amasis, cotemporary with Cyrus, so flourished in wealth and population, that, according to Herodotus, it contained twenty thousand towns *, some of which were of extraordinary size and magnificence. Egypt was at this time the academy of Greece; all who sought a literary reputation, visited this antient seat of science; and the circumstance of having conversed with the fathers of wisdom gave celebrity to a Greek philosopher. About a hundred years before the reign of Amasis, a civil war in Egypt had given occasion to the establishment of a Grecian colony in that kingdom. On a failure of the antient line of the Pharaohs, twelve chiefs had divided the sovereignty, and governed with equal authority. Psammeticus, one of the number, being suspected by the rest, was banished to the marshy regions of Egypt. This disaster proved the means of his deliverance, for, with the assistance of some piratical adventurers from Caria and Ionia, whom a tempest had thrown upon these shores, he subdued the twelve kingdoms, and became master of Egypt †.

Grateful to his Grecian auxiliaries, Psammeticus not only recompensed them liberally, but assigned them portions of land, and gave them a settlement in his dominions near the mouth of the Nile. Till that period, foreign nations were debarred access to Egypt: at the city of Naucratis only they were allowed to land and to trade. Psammeticus opened his ports to the commerce of all nations, favoured navigation in his seas, and granted privileges to strangers who chose to settle in Egypt. Particularly attached to the Greeks, he protected and encouraged them; educated his children in the Gre-

* Herod. lib. ii. cap. 152, 153. † Lib. ii. cap. 177.

cian manner, and entered into an alliance with the Athenians and other states of Greece.

The revolution must have operated a change in the antient constitutions of Egypt. The influence of the great families would be diminished, and a monarch, who reigned by an army of foreigners, would naturally subject his dominions to military rule. The sceptre of Psammeticus did not remain long in his family ; Apries, his grandson, was dethroned, and Amasis, a private Egyptian, acquired the sovereignty. This prince is numbered among the Egyptian legislators. He made new regulations for the re-partition of the provinces, and improving the form, promoted the tranquillity of government. Under his reign, Egypt attained to its greatest height of prosperity and population. Extending the policy of Psammeticus, he removed the Ionian and Carian soldiers to Memphis, and formed them into a guard for his person. He greatly encouraged the resort of the Greeks to Egypt, and even permitted them to build temples, and to have their processions and religious ceremonies after the manner of their country. Farther to cultivate a general interest among the Greeks, he made ample presents to the Amphictyons for rebuilding the temple of Delphi.

This enlightened and able prince died at an advanced age, and was succeeded by his son Psammenitus ; while Cambyses, after making preparations for four years, turned his arms against Egypt. The Persians were utterly unacquainted with naval affairs, but they had an absolute command of whatever the Asian Greeks could supply. Tyre also, the first maritime power of the world, was under the dominion of Cambyses. The Cyprian Greeks had also submitted to the Persian power ; and all these people contributed to form the fleet and army which were to invade Egypt. Yet all the formidable force of this

extensive

extensive empire might have failed, but for the opportune arrival of Phanes, the Halicarnassian. This officer, who was high in command among the Grecian auxiliaries, offended at Psammenitus or his ministers, deserted from the Egyptian service, and came over to Cambyses. The approach to Egypt from Asia with a large army, from the nature of the intervening country, is extremely difficult, even though there was no enemy to oppose its progress: but in Phanes the Halicarnassian, the Persians found an able conductor, who had an accurate knowledge of the country, and of the approaches that led to its frontier. The army had to pass through a part of the Desert Arabia; Phanes purchased the friendship of an independent Arabian chief, such as still hold dominion in that country, and through his assistance the troops were accommodated with provisions, and, what was still more difficult in these regions, were supplied with water *, which was transported on camels through the desert. Thus a formidable obstacle was overcome, and the army met the fleet before Pelusium. That city, the key of Egypt, was taken after a short siege. Psammenitus was soon after defeated in a great battle, and the whole country submitted to the conqueror. The neighbouring Africans, and the Greeks of Cyrene and Barca, sent offers of submission, and became tributary. Elated with the acquisition, and giddy with success, Cambyses meditated farther conquests, aad proposed to make war at the same time upon the Carthaginians, Ammonians, and Ethiopians. The first expedition he was forced to lay aside, as the Phenicians refused to assist in a war against their descendants. Determined on the other two, he sent ambassadors with presents to the king of Ethiopia,

* Herodot. lib. iii. cap. 44.

in order to inspect the state and estimate of the strength of the country. This monarch suspecting their intentions, sent his own bow as a present to Cambyses, and delivered it to the ambassadors, with this advice: "Tell your master not to attack the Ethiopians till he can bend the bow of their king, and to thank the gods for not having inspired us with the ambition of extending our dominions." Enraged with this answer, Cambyses commanded his army to begin their march, without having formed any plan of conduct, or furnished himself with provisions for such an undertaking. When he arrived at Thebes, in Upper Egypt, he sent a detachment of fifty thousand men against the Ammonians, ordering them to ravage the whole country, and to burn the temple of Jupiter Ammon. After they had marched for several days in the desert, a violent whirlwind blew from the south, clouds of sand involved the atmosphere, and the whole army was overwhelmed and buried in the wilderness. Cambyses in the mean time marched forward with frantic rage against the Ethiopians; but when he had advanced about a fifth part of the way, his troops having consumed all their beasts of burthen, were obliged to feed on herbs and grass, and were in danger of perishing by famine. Cambyses at last gave up the wild enterprise, and, after having lost more than one half of his army in the desert, returned to Thebes.

Upon his arrival in that city, he ordered all the temples, which were incredibly rich and magnificent, to be pillaged and burnt to the ground. Marching back to Memphis, he found the whole city dissolved in festivity and mirth, which he concluded was on account of his unsuccessful expedition. Not believing the magistrates, who declared that the appearance of their god Apis among them was the

occasion

occasion of the public rejoicings, he caused them to be put to death; and next enquired of the priests, who returning the same answer, he desired to see their god, who was so familiar and condescending as to appear to his votaries. The god was accordingly introduced: Cambyses, on seeing a calf, kindled into rage, and drawing his dagger, wounded Apis in the thigh, and reproaching the priests for their stupid idolatry in worshipping a brute, ordered them to be whipped, and all who should be found celebrating the feast of Apis to be slain.

The killing of Apis was looked upon by the Egyptians as an action of the most dreadful impiety; and they affirm, that Cambyses after the commission of it was immediately seized with madness. But from the tenor of his conduct we may conclude that he was so before. Indeed, ever since the conquest of Egypt, his actions were those of an extravagant and frantic tyrant, his wildness often approaching to insanity.

On his return to Persia, a herald from Susa met his army, and ordered him to obey Smerdis the son of Cyrus, who was proclaimed king. Conscious that his brother Smerdis had been put to death by his own orders, Cambyses vowed vengeance against the impostor, but an accidental wound from his own sword delivered the world from his cruelty and oppression.

The usurper of the throne was one of the magi, and brother to Patisithes, who had been invested with the administration of affairs during the absence of Cambyses. The imposture was detected, and a conspiracy being formed by seven of the nobles, the counterfeit Smerdis was slain, and Darius, the son of Hystaspes, governor of Persia, was appointed master of the empire.

Darius was descended of the royal family of Achæmenes, and his father Hystaspes had attended Cyrus in all his wars. The better to secure himself on the throne, he married the two daughters of Cyrus, Atossa and Artystona; and made it the object of his reign to complete or improve the plan which Cyrus had traced for the administration of his vast dominions. He divided his empire into twenty satrapies or governments; and, for the better regulation of the revenue and defence of the state, imposed an annual tribute on the provinces. Persia alone was exempted from taxes. In apportioning the imposts, and directing their collection, he is said to have discovered much discernment, as well as great moderation; yet antient customs are so respected in the East, and the sacrifice of private convenience to public necessity is every where so difficult, that the Persians, forming a comparison of their three first emperors, called Cyrus the Father, Cambyses the Tyrant, and Darius the Merchant of the empire.

The Babylonians, who bore the yoke of Persia with impatience, because the seat of empire was transferred to Susa, revolted from Darius in the fifth year of his reign. He besieged the city with a numerous army; but, after he had continued for twenty months before the walls, he was about to renounce the enterprise, when Zopyrus, one of the chief nobility, with unexampled generosity devoted himself to the glory and interest of his master. Having mangled his face, and wounded his body, he deserted to the city, and presented himself to the inhabitants as the victim of Darius's cruelty. The Babylonians gave him their confidence, and the command of their army. At different sallies he cut off several thousands of the Persians, according to a private agreement with Darius, who had exposed them

them on purpose half armed; the king then approaching the walls with all his army, Zopyrus opened the gates of Babylon, and admitted the Persians. Having obtained possession, Darius demolished the walls, and put to death three thousand of the citizens who were most active in the revolt. He raised Zopyrus to the highest honours, and bestowed upon him the revenues of Babylon for life.

The Persian monarch now extended his sway over all the civilized nations of the world, which have hitherto been the subjects of historical record. Assyria, whose fame ascends to the earliest ages; Egypt, the seat of antient kings, the scene of so many wonders, and the birth-place of the arts and sciences; Babylon, which in its magnificence and splendour awed or commanded the world; Media, which had subsisted for centuries in independent lustre; Lydia and Lesser Asia, celebrated for opulence and arts; Tyre, which by commercial consequence and naval power had obtained a distinguished rank among the nations; were united into one vast empire, and acknowledged the authority of the great king. There scarcely appeared in the world an object for the Persian ambition, and it might have been expected that an enlightened and provident prince like Darius, would have preferred a peaceful reign to new conquests, and been satisfied with the glory of regulating and improving his vast dominions without endeavouring to extend them. But foreign conquest is sometimes necessary to prevent internal commotions, and monarchs have been compelled to carry on wars abroad in order to preserve tranquillity at home. "It had not been the manner of the Persians," says Herodotus, "to be idle or inactive." Military glory was their chief object, and they had been accustomed to consider their sovereigns as conquerors. Perhaps it was the

necessity

necessity of giving employment to such restless and ambitious spirits, that prompted Darius to make war on the Scythian barbarians that inhabited the frozen regions between the Danube and the Tanais. The character of this singular people has continued unaltered from age to age. They perambulate, rather than possess, a country of immense extent. Exercising no tillage, they claim no property in land: they hold in abhorrence and scorn the confinement of a fixed habitation, roaming perpetually, with their families and herds, from pasture to pasture, over their boundless wilderness. In this vagabond life, not to trespass on the property of each other, is almost their only law. Their simple desires are limited to food, which their herds supply, and to clothing, which the extreme cold of their climate renders peculiarly necessary: for the whole extent of their country being far removed from the balmy influence of the ocean, and, though mostly plain, yet of extraordinary elevation above the level of the sea, being bounded even on the south by snowy mountains, while the tract northward is a continued continent of snow, their winters are of a severity unknown under the same latitude in other parts of the globe. Nature has therefore supplied the brute animals of those regions with a peculiar warmth of covering. To man is only given ability to wrest such boons from the inferior creation. The ingenuity of the antient Scythians went thus far. Necessity drove them to the use of those furs for clothing, which are become such an extensive article of useless, perhaps often pernicious, luxury in milder climates. Such a country, with such inhabitants, would little invite the ambition of others; but the Scythians, instinctively fond of wandering, were likely to be inspired with a desire to wander among the possessions of their civilized and opulent neighbours;

bours; and though their manner of life resembles that of animals, yet it has always been that of gregarious animals. They migrate in such multitudes, that their progression is scarcely resistible. War was, moreover, peculiarly their delight; humanity and pity were totally aliens to their warfare. Scalping was practised by them nearly in the same manner as by the American Indians. None could claim his share of plunder, who had not an enemy's head to present to his chief. The scalp then became the warrior's favourite ornament for his own person, and that of his horse: the number he possessed decided his reputation and his rank. Without this testimonial of military merit, none could be admitted to their principal feasts; where, as among our Scandinavian ancestors, probably their descendants, the skulls of slain enemies were their drinking-cups *.

Thrice, in very early times, these ferocious vagabonds are said to have over-run the finest provinces of Asia: but their irruptions had more the effect of an inundation or a hurricane, than of an expedition devised and conducted by human policy. The devastation was transitory; the barbarous invaders retreated into their deserts, and Asia resumed its former flourishing and opulent state.

The expedition of Darius against the Scythians, was said to have been undertaken to punish these roaming barbarians for their invasion of Asia, about a hundred years before. Immense preparations were made; and, with an army, as it is said, of seven hundred thousand men, Darius traversed Asia Minor, crossed the Thracian Bosphorus, ravaged Thrace, and arrived on the banks of the Danube. Meanwhile a fleet of six hundred sail left the Asiatic

* Justin. Herodot. Mitford's History of Greece, p. 288.

coast,

coast, and passing the narrow seas which joined the Egean to the Euxine, coasted in a northern direction the shores of the latter, entered the mouth of the Danube, and sailed along that river until they joined the army. The Danube was passed by the usual expedient of a bridge of boats, which was built by the assistance of the fleet, consisting chiefly of Ionians, who were left to guard the work of their hands against the dangers of the elements, and the destructive rage of the barbarians *.

This formidable army entered the vast wilderness of Scythia, and found no enemy to oppose their force. The Scythians retreated before them, according to their custom, when their territories were invaded, filling up the wells and springs, and laying waste the country. Want of subsistence soon obliged Darius to retire towards more cultivated regions. Then the Scythians, collecting their strength, pressed upon his rear. Their mode of fighting resembled that of the modern Tartars. They combated from their horses; skilful and daring in skirmishes, but incapable of order or discipline, they defeated an enemy in detail, continually harassing and cutting off detached parties, without ever coming to a general engagement. The Persian cavalry shrunk from the impetuosity of the Scythian charge; but the Scythians could make no impression upon the compact body of the Persian foot. A retreat through such a country, in presence of a superior cavalry, was difficult and dangerous. Darius marched towards the Danube. A strong detachment of the Scythians, arriving at that river before him, pressed the Ionians, who had been left to guard the bridge, to break it down and retire to their own country. By these means they hoped to revenge the invasion of

* Herodot. lib. iv. cap. 1.

the Persians, by confining them, without resource, in an inhospitable desert. Miltiades, the Athenian, prince or tyrant of the Thracian Chersonese, was eager to embrace so favourable an opportunity of shaking off the Persian yoke. The other chiefs of the Grecian cities listened with pleasure to his proposals. Though they held their authority under the protection of Darius, they preferred the recovery of national independence to the preservation of personal dignity. Hystæus, tyrant of Miletus, was alone averse to this bold resolution. He represented to the Ionian chiefs, that their own interest was intimately connected with the safety of Darius; that if, by the destruction of his army, the Persian empire should fall, the Greeks would immediately discover their partiality for republican government, reassume liberty, and expel them from their governments. The opinion of Hystæus prevailed, and the Persians repassed the Danube. Defended by that river from the attacks of the enemy, they continued their march unmolested to the Hellespont. Leaving a charge in Thrace, under Megabazus, he returned to Asia, and took up his quarters in Sardis.

Modern historians have represented this expedition of Darius as disgraceful to his name, and destructive to the empire; but it did not affect his reputation, or his consequence in his own age, and among the nations of antiquity. On his return, the Gr cian colonies in Ionia and Eolia, vied in paying their court to him. The army left under Megabazus subdued the Thracians, and extended the Persian dominion to the borders of Macedonia. Amyntas, king of that country, acknowledged subjection to the king of Persia, by the delivery of earth and water; the Grecian islands also began to feel the influence, and submit to the power of Darius.

Unsuccessful in his attempts to subdue the Scythians,

thians, Darius resolved to extend his arms towards the east; and with this view, equipped a fleet on the river Indus, the command of which he gave to Scylax, a Grecian. Scylax accordingly sailing down the Indus, entered the Red-sea, by the straits of Babel-Mandel; and, on the thirtieth month from his setting out, landed in Egypt, near the bottom of the gulph. From thence returning to Susa, he gave Darius an account of his discoveries and observations: the Persian monarch entering India at the head of a numerous army, added that vast and opulent country to his dominions. This important acquisition, which closed the long series of Persian conquests in Asia, was formed into the twentieth satrapy, or great division of the empire.

From this period, the history of the Persians becomes blended with that of the Greeks.

CHAP. VII.

The Government, Laws, Customs, Manners, and Religion of the PERSIANS.

WE have mentioned, that Dejoces introduced despotic government among the Medes. His example was imitated by his successors; and when Media became an accession to the Persian power, the new monarch adopted the same policy, and confirmed that absolute authority which has ever been established in Asia. The sovereigns of the East have assumed, in all ages, the title of King of Kings;

a title expressive of the nature, as well as of the greatness of their power. The various provinces subjected to them, though acknowledging their universal dependence on the Emperor, were yet subject to their particular princes, who, while they paid their appointed tribute during peace, and furnished their contingent of troops in the time of war, were permitted, in their antient territories, to retain the power, and to display the pomp, of royalty. Materials are wanting to explain in full detail the system of Persian government; but many circumstances contribute to shew that it was constituted with much political wisdom; and in the revolutions of Oriental empire, those nations to whom despotic government appears congenial, never seem to have been so happy as under Cyrus and his successors. The whole empire was divided into large provinces, each under the superintendancy of a great officer, entitled Satrap, to whom all governors of towns and smaller districts were responsible. To prevent abuses which might be made of so extensive authority, the king reserved to himself the nomination of the superior, as well as of the inferior governors: the latter depended immediately on the prince himself, and were not removable at the pleasure of the satraps. These two powers thus became a check upon each other, and cooperated in the administration of the government, without disturbing its tranquillity. It was a political maxim introduced by Cyrus, and continued by his successors, no less remarkable for its liberality than its utility, to appoint the son of the conquered prince to be governor of the conquered country; always, however, under the superintending controul of a Persian satrap *.

* Herodot. lib. i. cap. 154.

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To facilitate intercourse and communication between the distant parts of this extensive empire, and to connect the capital with the remotest provinces, couriers were appointed, who travelled day and night to carry dispatches, and an establishment was made, that in some degree resembled the modern post. The business of government alone, without any regard to commercial intercourse, or the convenience of individuals, was the object of this regulation, which does honour to the memory of Cyrus, and shews that he knew how to govern as well as to conquer kingdoms. This appears to have been the first model of that institution, which, through the liberal system of European politics, and the ascendancy which commerce has acquired in the affairs of nations, now extends communication so wonderfully over the world.

The king of Persia, according to the antient custom of his country, was wont to visit, from time to time, all the provinces of the empire, or, when prevented by important business, to send commissioners for that purpose, who were called the *eyes* and *ears* of the prince. The internal improvements, as well as the external security of the satrapies, came within the sphere of their policy; the security and embellishment of towns and cities, the reparation of highways and bridges, the improvement of agriculture, and the encouragement of manufactures, were the important objects of their care and inspection. These regulations and attentions indicate a people who had made considerable progress in the art of government, and were worthy of a king who had a monitor to repeat to him every morning, "Arise, prince, and think of the functions for which Oromasdes has placed thee on the throne."

The care of the revenues was looked upon as an important object of political economy. Every

province had its separate treasury, in which all contributions were deposited. During the reigns of Cyrus and Cambyses, voluntary contributions were made by the people for the support of the king and the expences of government. Darius, the son of Hystaspes, was the first who, by imposing annual taxes, regulated the revenue of the empire: the sum total of the revenue under this monarch, according to the computation of Herodotus, amounted to fourteen thousand five hundred and sixty Eubœic talents, equal to three millions six hundred and seventy-five thousand pounds sterling. Considering the relative value of money in antient and in modern times, this vast revenue amounted to thirty millions of our currency. Besides this stated income, the Persian monarchs might, on every necessary occasion, demand the contributions and services of their subjects.

Besides these tributes, which were paid in money, there were also contributions paid in kind, as in the early history of the European kingdoms. Armenia sent annually to the king of Persia twenty thousand young colts. The provinces of Cyrene and Barca were, besides the ordinary taxes, compelled to furnish such a quantity of corn as was sufficient to supply a hundred and twenty thousand men. The satrapy of Babylon maintained the king and his court, during four months of the year. The Persians were exempted from imposts of every kind, and no tributes were exacted but from the conquered nations.

The kings of Persia, like the other sovereigns of the East, were accustomed to administer justice in their own persons *. To qualify them for the discharge of this important office, they were instructed at an early age in the knowledge of the laws and

* Joseph. Antiq. Just. lib. ii. cap. 3.

customs

customs of their country; and in the public schools youth were taught equity, justice, and truth, in the same manner as rhetoric and philosophy are studied in modern times.

The ordinary judges were taken from the class of old men; the experience and maturity of fifty years were deemed essential to the discharge of this awful employment. They held their office for life, and were called royal judges, some of them attending the king wherever he went, and others administering justice at stated times in the different provinces. The impartiality and integrity of judicial proceedings were objects of royal attention. Cambyses, having condemned to death a judge who had suffered himself to be corrupted, ordered his skin to be stretched on the tribunal where he had given judgment, and where the son of that judge was to succeed his father. Masters were prohibited from putting their slaves to death *. The power of life and death, which fathers exercised over their children among many nations of antiquity, was mitigated in Persia, nor were parents permitted to exercise it for slight faults or a first offence. In trials, the person accused was confronted with the accuser, who, in case of a false accusation, was condemned to the punishment which the other would have suffered had he been found guilty. First offences were seldom punished with death. Before sentence was pronounced, the whole tenor of the offender's life was examined, and if his virtues greatly preponderated, the rigour of the law was softened; it being unjust, in the opinion of the Persians, that a single crime should obliterate the good actions of a meritorious life. From the legislation of the Persians it appears, that they were distinguished from the

* Herodot. lib. i. cap. 137.

 nations

nations of the East by their humanity as well as by their valour.

The hardy inhabitants of the mountainous regions in Asia have always held a decided superiority over the possessors of the fertile plains. The Assyrians, who extended their conquests from the Indus to the Mediterranean, came from the mountains of Atouria. The Chaldeans were originally from the same countries; and the Persians, whose conquests fill the page of history, and who have given their name to a large division of Asia, descended from the hilly and rocky regions of Elam. Originally a people of soldiers, their character was warlike, and their education prepared them for military achievements. The first lessons of a Persian were to manage a horse, to use the bow with dexterity, and to speak truth. This moral virtue is naturally connected with the character of a military nation; falsehood and cowardice, valour and veracity, have a natural and intimate connection, as appears from European as well as Asiatic manners. From the age of twenty-five to fifty years, the Persians were obliged to serve in the army. It was their practice always to wear their swords, and to go armed, in the time of peace as well as of war. In eating they were temperate and abstemious, but indulged in wine, and during the banquet unfolded their minds and concerted their counsels. On the following morning the resolutions of the past night were reviewed, and, after calm deliberation, were rejected or adopted. The ordinary arms of the Persians were a scymetar, a dagger which hung in their belt, and two javelins or lances, the one to throw at a distance, the other to engage with in close combat. On the head they wore a tiara, which was proof against all kinds of defensive weapons; on the body, a coat of mail wrought in the likeness of scales; their thighs were defended

defended with cuisses; and their shields or targets were of wicker.

The craggy mountains which they inhabited, were unfavourable to the rearing of horses, and the poverty of their circumstances was ill adapted to maintain them in great numbers. While all the other nations of Upper Asia, except the Scythians, fought on horseback, the Persian armies were composed chiefly of infantry. In all ages the most celebrated victories have been obtained by this mode of fighting. The Grecians under Alexander, the Romans under the republic, as well as the Northern barbarians who over-ran and subdued the Roman empire, became masters of the world chiefly through the firm intrepidity of their infantry; and there is reason to believe, that one great cause of the Persian conquests was—not their acquaintance with horsemanship, but their ignorance of that art, which obliged them to employ the determined valour of foot-soldiers against the desultory assaults of horsemen. While their neighbours, trusting to the swiftness of their steeds, employed the feeble efforts of distant hostility, the Persians fought hand to hand, each man closely engaging with his foe. Their chiefs seldom appeared in public but on horseback; and in this manner held their assemblies, visited their friends, and transacted all their public and private affairs. When they went on any military expedition, the women always attended the camp, according to the uniform customs of the East. In the time of action, the king was always in the centre; and when the signal was given by sound of trumpets, it was followed by an universal shout of the whole army. The royal banner was a spread eagle of gold, carried on the point of a ong spear. They did not employ stratagems in war, and sought no advantages but what were owing to their valour.

They never fought in the night, unless attacked by the enemy, nor marched before the rising of the sun. Duels, or single combats, were frequent among them; and they settled their private quarrels by the decision of the sword.

By their continual exercise of hunting, they prepared themselves for the toils of war. They never laid aside their swords, quivers, and bows, but when they went to repose, and had them even then always ready at hand. As soon as they attained the age of bearing arms, they were obliged to enter themselves on the list of soldiers. In time of war, they were all bound, on pain of death, unless disabled by age or disease, to appear under their respective standards, and attend the king in his expeditions *.

Polygamy and concubinage were permitted by their laws, as among all the nations of the East. Respect to the aged, particularly to parents, was held a virtue of indelible obligation. The love of truth strongly characterized their manners; it was held infamous to lye, as well as to live upon credit, because meanness and falsehood seemed to be inseparable from such a life. Herodotus affirms, from his own certain knowledge, that these customs prevailed among the Persians: but the character and manners of the nation which had conquered under Cyrus, were not exempted from change and corruption. Of all the antient nations, the Persians, according to Herodotus, were the most disposed to adopt the customs of their neighbours. They soon preferred the dress and the arms of the Medes to their own. After they had conquered Egypt, they assumed the armour of the Egyptians; and

* Ammian. Marcellin. lib. xxiii. Strabo, lib. xv. Herodot. lib. i. & iv.

when

when they became acquainted with the Greeks, they imitated the worst of their vices. There was scarcely any direction of human depravity which they might not acquire from the universal licentiousness and corruption of Babylon. In the space of fifty-two years that intervened between the taking of that capital, and the battle of Marathon, the spirit and manners of the Persians had changed; the hardy and intrepid warriors who had conquered Asia, were themselves subdued by the vices of that luxurious city.

The religion of the antient Persians is valuable for its intrinsic excellence, venerable for its high antiquity, and worthy of admiration for having been preserved in uncorrupted purity for more than two thousand years. Two systems of religion, from time immemorial, had prevailed in Asia; that of the Sabians, who worshipped images; and that of the magians, who venerated fire. The followers of the former considered the sun, moon, and stars, as the habitations of celestial intelligences, who animated those orbs, and were the causes of all their motions. The planets being the nearest to them of all the heavenly bodies, and generally believed to have the greatest influence on this world, divine worship was directed to them. Here began the idolatry of the antient world. They first adored their divinities in the orbs which they inhabited, which they considered as a kind of temples to the invisible intelligences by which they were moved; and, in offering their devotions to any of their gods, directed their worship towards the planet in which, after their consecration, they believed that their respective divinities condescended to dwell in a mysterious manner. The sun, and the planets, under the names of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Apollo, Mercury, Venus, and Diana, were the first or greater gods among the antient polytheists.

lytheists. This Sabian superstition originated in Chaldea, as I have formerly mentioned, and from thence spread itself over a great part of Asia. This sect still subsists in the East, under the antient name of Sabians, and has procured much influence and credit among the Eastern people, for giving birth to the most celebrated of their astronomers.

Directly opposite to these were the opinions of the magians, which formed the other great division of Oriental religion. Abhorring images and idolatry, they worshipped God only, under the symbol of fire. They held the doctrine of two principles; one the cause of all good, the other of all evil. The former, represented by light, they adored under the name of Ormuzd, called Oromasdes by the Greeks; the latter, imaged by darkness, they worshipped by the title of Ahriman or Arimanius. When they implored blessings for themselves or their friends, they supplicated the author of good; when they imprecated destruction to their enemies, they invoked the artificer of evil. Hence, when Xerxes prayed that his enemies might always banish their best and bravest citizens, as the Athenians had done Themistocles, he addressed his prayer to Arimanius, not to Oromasdes *. In allusion to these opinions is the sublime address to Cyrus in the prophecy of Isaiah †: "I am the Lord, and there is NO GOD besides me. I girded thee, though thou hast not KNOWN me; that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is NONE ELSE. I form the LIGHT, and create DARKNESS; I make PEACE, and create EVIL: I the Lord do all these things."

Zerdusht ‡, or Zoroaster, who lived in the reign of

* Plutarch. in Themistoc.

† Isa. chap. xlv. ver. 5, 6, 7.

‡ Zerdusht, in the Persian language, signifies an observer of the heavens.

of Darius Hystaspes, is said to have reformed the magian religion. Smerdis had ascended the Persian throne after the death of Cambyses, by the influence of the magi. The imposture was detected; Smerdis was put to death; a general slaughter was made of the magi or priests; that sect began to decline, and Sabianism to prevail. But the affection which the people bore to the principles in which they had been educated, and the religion of their fathers, rendered the revival or reformation of it an object not only easy but desirable. Zoroaster, who acted in concert with Hystaspes, the father of Darius, and superintendant of the magi, has ever been celebrated as the prophet of the Persians.

The chief reformation which he made in the magian theology, was in its first principle. Formerly they had held the co-eternity of two supreme causes, the author of good and the author of evil, represented by light and darkness: he introduced a principle superior to both; one supreme God, independent and self-existing. This divine Being, according to the Persian sage, originally created only light, or good; but that darkness or evil resulted from it as its defect, and followed it as the shadow does the body. Under the first cause were two inferior, though powerful, agents, the angel of light, and the angel of darkness; diffusing good and evil in their respective regions. These are to remain in a perpetual conflict till the end of the world, when there shall be a general resurrection, and a day of judgment, in which, just retribution shall be rendered to all according to their works. After which the evil angel and his followers shall go into the regions of everlasting darkness, to receive the punishment due to their crimes, while the good angel and his disciples shall ascend to the mansions of everlasting light, to enjoy the reward of their virtues: the final separation

separation will then be made, and light and darkness be no more mixed to all eternity *.

Zoroaster, reforming not only the principle but the mode of worship, ordered fire-temples to be built throughout the Persian dominions. Hitherto they had erected their altars on the tops of hills, and on high places in the open air, where often, by rain and tempests, the sacred fire was extinguished: to prevent this, temples were built over their altars, and their religious ceremonies performed without interruption. They considered fire as the symbol and the residence of the divine nature; but not as the divine nature itself. The sun being the purest and most perfect fire, as well as the noblest production of the Deity, they regarded as the visible throne of his glory, and the Shechinah of the divine presence. Hence, in paying their adorations, they turned their faces towards this luminary, called by them Mithra, particularly at the time of his rising. The sun, however, was no more than the Rebla or point of adoration to the Persians, as the temple of Jerusalem was to the Jews, or the city of Mecca to the Mahommedans.

A religious reverence for fire has prevailed over a great part of the world. An ever-burning fire was preserved in the temple of Vesta. The antient Germans, the Celtæ, the Peruvians, and other nations of America, annexed the idea of something sacred and divine to this element. A perpetual flame ascended on the altar of burnt-offerings at Jerusalem; God revealed himself to Moses in a burning bush, and announced his presence to the host of Israel by a pillar of fire.

There were three orders of priests among the

* Diogenes Laert. in Procemio. Plut. de Isid. & Osir. Hyde, Relig. vol. Pers. Prideaux.

antient

antient Persians; the ordinary and officiating; superintendants of these; and the archimagus, or chief-priest. Their public worship was thus performed. In every pyreum, or fire-temple, an altar was erected, on which the holy fire, which they believed came down from heaven, was kept perpetually burning by the priests, who watched it day and night. When the people assembled to their devotions, the priest put on a white vestment and a mitre, with a covering of gauze before his mouth, that he might not breathe on the sacred element. He then read certain prayers out of the sacred books, in a tone scarcely audible, holding in his left hand small twigs of a consecrated tree, which, as soon as the service was over, he threw into the fire.

From the near resemblance which this sublime system of theology bears to the sacred Scriptures, it has been supposed * that Zoroaster was a disciple of the Jewish prophets. Whatever foundation may be for this conjecture, it is certain that the religion of the Persians continued infinitely superior to the gross superstitions of their idolatrous neighbours. Adoring one God, they believed him to be omnipresent, and held it impious and profane to represent the invisible Majesty of heaven by images or statues, or to circumscribe the Lord of the universe within the boundaries of temples. Actuated by a zeal against idolatry, they overturned the religious monuments and edifices of the Greeks, as unworthy of the Deity. The tolerating spirit of the Greeks and Romans arose from polytheism, not from philosophy; and perhaps from mistaken principles of theism the Persians became intolerant. Hence proceeded the outrages of Cambyses in Egypt, and of Xerxes in Greece.

In the decline of their empire, one of their princes

* Hyde, cap. ii.

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introduced the worship of foreign divinities, particularly of Venus; but it was condemned by the magi, who remained firm to this great article of their faith, *there is but one* God; and took care to transmit it religiously to their posterity *.

After the lapse of so many centuries, the revolutions of empire, and the fall of nations, the religion of Zoroaster is still preserved in the East in its purity; and the modern Parses adore the same object of worship, with the same rites and ceremonies, as was done by their forefathers in the time of Darius Hystaspes. Antient and modern authors, who have made the Persians the subjects of record, have always represented these as their genuine religious tenets. Herodotus, the first profane historian who makes mention of this celebrated people, notwithstanding the prejudices of polytheism with which he was tinctured, gives a description of their theology, which every subsequent account of antient authors, and all the researches of the modern, tend only to confirm. "These I have found to be the religious tenets of the Persians †. In celebrating their religious worship, they employed neither altars, nor images, nor temples; they even derided the folly of such practices in others, not believing, like the Greeks, that the nature of the gods resembled that of men. On the summits of the highest mountains they sacrificed to the Divinity, and the whole circle of the heavens they supposed to be the residence of God. In their addresses to the Deity, they are not permitted to solicit for themselves individually the protection of Heaven, the prayer must extend to the whole Persian nation." The account given by Plutarch ‡ of the doctrines of Zoroaster, is confor-

* Hyde, cap. ii. † De Isid. et Osir.
‡ Lib. i. cap. 131, 132.

mable

mable to this description, and corresponds to the religion of the antient patriarchs. In the sacred commentary of the Persian rites we have the following memorable words ascribed to the philosophical reformer of their theology: "God is the first of beings, unbegotten, incorruptible, eternally without parts or dimensions, dissimilar to every created existence, the bestower of all good, not to be bribed by presents or entreaties, infinite in goodness and wisdom, the parent of equity and justice *." In modern times, an European philosopher † enquired of the Persians settled in India, "at what seasons, and with what ceremonies, they adored the sun?" They answered, "that they never adored the sun, nor paid divine honours to that luminary, to the moon, or to the planets, but only turned themselves to the sun when praying, because they considered it to be the purest kind of fire."

Their morality was in the same strain with their theology, as we may judge from "The Wisdom of all Ages," a book ascribed to one of their earliest monarchs. "Great kings are gods upon earth, who in power, wisdom, and goodness, are as much superior to the rest of men, as God is superior to them. Let not their high rank however lead them to behave with severity to their subjects. The thunder is heard but seldom, the sun shines every day. For one instance of vengeance, God bestows ten thousand tokens of his favour. Kings ought to imitate him by doing good. Let them recollect, that though it is in their power to take away life, it is not in their power to restore it. Ministers are instruments in the hand of monarchs, but it is to these that the people must have recourse

* Euseb. Preparat. Evang. lib. i. cap. ult.

† An intimate friend of Dr. Hyde.

when

when their rights are violated. Let a king be careful in the choice of his ministers: for, laying his mal-administration to their charge will have as little effect in calming his enraged people, as for a murderer to plead in his vindication, that it was his sword, and not himself, which slew his neighbour."

The duties prescribed to the magi, or priests, were calculated for an order of men who were to give instructions, and set an example to the people. They were enjoined to observe the rites prescribed in the liturgy of Zoroaster; to keep their eyes from coveting what belonged to another; to have a sacred regard to truth; to apply to the exercises of devotion, without intermeddling with worldly affairs; to be ready to forgive injuries, and to shew themselves patterns of meekness; to spend the greater part of their time in the temple, and to observe the law of Zoroaster without addition or diminution *.

The following precepts related to the chief priest. He ought to preserve himself spotless, because God had chosen him to be holy: he should take tithes from the laity, but only as the almoner of the Deity, that he may divide among the poor the tribute paid by the rich: he ought not only to be well skilled in the law, but likewise in every science, because it is his duty to instruct all the professors of his religion; he ought to make it his study to distinguish truth from error; he should fear God only, and hate nothing but sin.

An order of priests adhering to these regulations, must have been worthy ministers of their religion, and valuable members of the community. By their sacerdotal functions they would strengthen morality with the sanctions of religion, and employ

* Lord's Relig. Pers.

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their influence over the minds of the people for the public good. But there is a difference between the maxims of speculative wisdom, and the conduct of actual life. The manners of the Persian priests were simple and austere; they went plainly dressed; they slept on the ground; their food was herbs or bread; and they passed much of their time in their devotions. But while they looked to heaven, they did not forget the affairs of earth. Like the priests of Egypt and Chaldea, they employed the ascendancy which they had acquired over the imagination and passions of men, to promote their own power and the interest of the order. They superintended the education of the kings and great men; no important affair was determined without their advice; and Pliny assures us, that, even in his time, they commanded the great king*. As their credit and consequence depended chiefly on their knowledge, they kept it a mystery, and no foreigner was initiated in their secrets without the permission of the prince; a favour which was granted to Themistocles, when he served the Persians against his own country.

In the history of all the nations which I have hitherto contemplated, the influence of superstition, and the power of the priesthood, appear astonishing. The Egyptian, Chaldean, and Persian priests, formed a separate order of men, and had separate interests, distinct from those of the community. Being the ministers of religion, the depositaries of science, the counsellors of kings, and the oracles of the people, the abuse of their power became frequent and unavoidable. That authority, derived, or pretended to be derived, from Heaven, which is so beneficial to society when employed in supporting the

* Plin. lib. xxx. cap. 1.

laws,

laws, and preserving or reforming the public morals, becomes baneful and pernicious when it is made the instrument of human passions and interested purposes.

The Persian religion, notwithstanding its refinement by Zoroaster, was soon corrupted by the priests, who, from political motives, and to gratify the gross conceptions of the multitude, blended it with a variety of puerile and absurd ceremonies, that incumbered and disgraced its original simplicity and beauty. The sages of antiquity, who discerned the principles of true religion themselves, seldom hesitated to gratify the people in their natural bias to superstition. To establish in the community at large, and among all orders of men in the state, the worship of a *pure Spirit* in Spirit and in truth, to recommend sanctity and virtue, purity of heart, and integrity of life, as the sole means of acceptance with the Deity, was reserved to that religion which was revealed from Heaven, and is contained in the Volumes of Inspiration.

CHAP. VIII.

General Reflections on the Rise and Progress of Asiatic Governments.

ALL nations have been barbarous before they were civilized. The early kingdoms established in the East retained the marks of such an original. From the beginning of their history, we find them engaged

engaged in military expeditions, but they conducted these in the manner of the barbarous hordes that wander over Scythia or Tartary. They did not commence and prosecute hostilities with a view to augment their territory or extend their dominion, but, like roaming tribes, by sudden eruptions, and for the sake of plunder. They sallied forth to depredation, not to conquest; they took the field without preparation, and became victorious without plan or project. They drew the sword before they had fixed on the foe with whom they were to engage. When Nebuchadnezzar marched against Jerusalem, he knew not whither he bent his course. Having come to a place where two roads met, he consulted fortune on which side he should turn his arms, and the lot fell upon Jerusalem.

Their armies were not a regular body of soldiers, but a confused multitude, without order. The whole nation went to war. In these disorderly mobs, the women and children equalled the number of the combatants, and followed them to the field like those of a Scythian band. No disciplined troops were kept in pay. The soldier received no reward for his services, but the fame of the adventure, and his share of the booty. Ages passed in Asia before an army was divided into regular corps. Cyaxares, according to Herodotus, was the author of this improvement. The Assyrians, Chaldeans, and the Persians, in the early period of their history, carried on their military expeditions, like the Scythian hordes in their neighbourhood, by sudden incursions, and for the sake of booty. War, the great cause of ruin to modern kingdoms, was a source of riches in the East.

As the armies of the East consisted of a promiscuous multitude, not divided into corps, nor reduced to calculation; hence the exaggerated and incredible accounts

accounts of the millions that accompanied Ninus and Semiramis. Nothing is so fallacious as to calculate numbers by the eye. The vague comparison of a great multitude to the stars of heaven, or the sands on the sea-shore, is a similar, though indefinite, expression of ignorance and uncertainty.

The first armies were composed of infantry; as we find among rude tribes in every part of the world. By degrees man extends his dominion over the inferior animals, acquires the art of taming them, and converting them to his use. It would soon occur to warlike tribes, that they might be employed with advantage in battle. In perusing the histories of different nations, we find that horses, elephants, camels, dogs, and even lions, have been trained to war. Of all animals, the horse is the most proper associate of man, and the aptest to partake with him in the dangers of the field. What may appear singular, the war-chariot has always preceded the use of cavalry. Not only the Asiatics, but the Greeks, the Gauls, and the Britons, rode in chariots of war before cavalry were introduced. When the fact is ascertained, it will readily occur to the mind, that the most natural and obvious method of subduing the wildness of the horse, and training him to the purposes of man, was by yoking him to a machine of considerable weight. This suggested the idea of chariots, which in their original construction were little more elegant than a cart or a sledge. To mount one of the strongest as well as swiftest of animals, and confide in the impetuous rapidity of his career, is a bolder and more complex operation. It must have been also attended with less difficulty to employ chariots than cavalry in battle. The combatant who mounted the war-chariot, was not distracted with the care of directing the horses: a charioteer accompanied him, who performed that office.

office. The attention of the horseman, who wanted this advantage, must necessarily have been divided between the care of fighting, and that of managing his horse.

The art of attacking and defending cities was not unknown in Asia. The sieges of Samaria, of Tyre, and of Jerusalem, recorded by sacred or profane historians, throw light on this subject. The ordinary method of attacking a place consisted in surrounding it with trenches and walls, so closely that none of the inhabitants could make their escape. Then they brought their battering-rams, to beat down the gates or the walls. When the breach was made, they attempted the assault. To favour and facilitate that measure, they raised terraces, which they lined with archers or slingers, to drive the besieged from the breach.

In defending cities and towns, they trusted to the strength and thickness of the walls, to the breadth of the ditch that surrounded them, to the height of the towers, and the various machines which were employed in darting missile weapons, and hurling huge masses of stone. These means were then sufficient to enable a place to hold out for a long time. The siege of Tyre, by Nebuchadnezzar, lasted thirteen years; and that of Azoth, by Psammeticus, twenty-nine: these facts will not appear surprising, when we reflect that a strong situation, aided by fortifications, in these ages, rendered a city impregnable. Besides, the sieges of Tyre and Azoth were mere blockades; and such cities could only be reduced by famine; a work difficult to be accomplished, as certain spaces of ground appropriated to tillage were inclosed within the walls.

In general, the people of Asia do not seem to have struck out many improvements in the military art. They discovered no skill in choosing advantageous

posts, in seizing favourable positions, in drawing the war into a country naturally defensible, in making use of defiles, in laying artful ambuscades, in taking advantage of the disposition of the ground, and reducing an enemy by cutting off his provisions. These efforts of ingenious invention, and military operations of a more complicated kind, were altogether unknown. Wars were decided in a single campaign: an army never attempted to recover itself or rally after a defeat; the gain of a battle drew after it the conquest of a country, and decided the fate of a kingdom.

The consequences of victory in Asia were of that dreadful kind which marks the atrocity of antient manners. They exercised the rights of conquest, without respecting the laws of humanity. Though the soldiers fought and conquered only for the benefit of their prince, whose slaves they were; yet in the first emotions of success they discovered all the eagerness of avarice, and all the fury of resentment; acting as if they had been called to punish not the enemies of their king, but their own personal foes; and as if each man had been entitled to reap the full fruits of his rapacious cruelty. Their early history is a continued series of barbarity and horror. The object of war was extermination. The effects of conquest were more dreadful than the battle. They spared neither age, nor rank, nor sex. The sovereign was no more respected than the subject, or, if a distinction was made, it was the former met with a more ignominious fate. This cruel and atrocious spirit raged against inanimate objects. A conquering army laid the subjected cities in ashes, destroyed the forests, blasted vegetation, and turned the conquered land into a desert, "to leave none to tell tidings" was an avowed maxim in these ages. They who have been accustomed to civilized manners, turn aside the eye from such scenes of barbarity

rity and bloodshed, and are filled with astonishment and horror, to find man a more cruel monster than the wolf or the tyger.

The rise of great kingdoms is the period when ferocity begins to soften, and the state of society to improve. Evils in nature tend to cure themselves. War terminates in conquest, which, uniting many nations under one sovereign, forms by degrees a great and powerful empire on the ruin of petty states. Living in greater societies, men act on a larger scale, acquire clearer views of their political interests, and form juster, as well as more generous maxims of government. The revolutions which take place mingle mankind together, and blending their sentiments and manners, wear off their asperity, and produce union. When the storm of war has spent its rage, an interval of tranquillity takes place. A great kingdom begins to act on different maxims from a small state. Exposed to the depredation of neighbouring and barbarous tribes, the means of defence are provided, cities are fortified, and a regular army kept in pay. In this manner a nation becomes formidable to its neighbours. The interior parts of a mighty monarchy are no longer exposed to ravages and devastations; driven from the centre, war infests only the frontiers. The inhabitants of the country, and of the cities, begin to breathe in safety, and turn the sword into the ploughshare. The military profession having become distinct and separate, the other inhabitants apply to industry, and cultivate the arts. From this era the dawnings of civility appear. In small communities, rival tribes, in the neighbourhood of one another, live in a constant state of open or concealed war. In a great nation, arms are in the hands of a few; the remainder cultivate the arts of peace; humanity and gentleness are introduced into life; and even the

soldier softens in the neighbourhood of pacific manners. A new career is opened for ingenious and active spirits to enter. In the bosom of great empires the arts were invented, the sciences arose, and refinement began its course.

From this period we find a mitigation to the rigours of war. When rival tribes fought from revenge, they gave no quarter, but made a general massacre; in the war of a nation against a nation, personal animosity and private passions are unknown. The conqueror opens his eyes to discern his interest, and makes a better use of his victories: instead of putting the conquered enemies to the sword, he reduces them to slavery, and employs them in useful labours. From the same principle, the victorious armies ceased to lay waste the regions they had subdued, as they became sensible that a country would be of no value which they had brought to desolation. Thus servitude, the greatest evil in the modern world, was an alleviation of greater calamities. Avarice and ambition came in aid of humanity, prevented the devastation of countries, and put a stop to the massacre of mankind.

Notwithstanding the frequent revolutions and conquests that have taken place in Asia, the eastern empires have always been despotic. No government however is a system of oppression from the beginning. The progress of power, particularly of tyrannical power, is slow and gradual. Although there were no fundamental laws in Asia which controlled the power of the monarch, antient customs had the force of laws, and were a barrier for some time against despotism. But the limits which customs set to sovereign power are vague and undefined. This obscurity is favourable to the monarch, who by insensible but certain steps extends his authority. But as monarchs are at first unacquainted with the

extent

extent of their own power, and become absolute only in the course of a progress, of which they do not foresee the termination, the governments of Asia, although despotic in the form of administration, were at the beginning favourable to the subject. It was one great object of government, in all the eastern empires, to encourage population and agriculture. The original law of the Creator, "increase, multiply, and replenish the earth," has never been forgotten in Asia, where, in modern as in antient times, a numerous progeny is looked upon as the chief blessing which Heaven can bestow. The monarch distributed rewards annually to such as had many children. To render population a blessing, it is necessary that the earth should produce sufficient nourishment for its inhabitants. The fine climate and fertile soil of Asia invited its possessors to avail themselves of this bounty of nature. To make agriculture flourish became an object of public attention and of imperial munificence. The satraps, whose provinces were best cultivated, enjoyed most of the royal favour: and superintendants were appointed to inspect their rural labours and œconomy. Hence the public works and canals at Babylon, similar to those in Egypt, to assist the fertility of the earth. In such reputation was husbandry held, that precepts concerning it entered into their books of religion. The saint, according to Zoroaster, was to plant useful trees, to destroy noxious animals, to convey water to the dry lands, and to follow the labours of agriculture. "He who sows the ground with care and diligence," says the Zendavesta, "acquires a greater stock of religious merit than he could gain by fasting and sacrifices." In the spring of every year a festival was celebrated, designed to represent the primitive equality and the present connexion of mankind. The monarch of the East, exchanging the

splendor of his throne for more genuine greatness, freely mingled with the humblest but most useful of his subjects. On that day the husbandmen were admitted, without distinction, to the table of the king and his satraps. The sovereign accepted their petitions, enquired into their grievances, and conversed with them on equal terms. "From your labours," said he, "we receive our subsistence; you derive your tranquillity from our vigilance; since, therefore, we are mutually necessary to each other, let us live together like brothers, in concord and love."

A similar festival is observed in China to this day. The Chinese emperor, surrounded with his courtiers, and in the presence of all the people, assists at the opening of the earth, and holds the plough with his own hands. As agriculture, the true and permanent source of wealth and prosperity, was thus honoured and encouraged in Asia, the mode in which the sovereigns raised their revenues was not oppressive to their subjects. The first provision for the monarchs was a part of the territory appropriated to their use. The wars in which they engaged became another source of their wealth. They drew the sword as an instrument of opulence as well as of conquest; they fought battles in order to possess the spoils of nations; and, without burdening their own subjects, enriched themselves by expeditions to which glory was annexed. The chief object of antient conquest, of the achievements of Sesostris, of Ninus, and Semiramis, was depredation and plunder; the captives which they carried along with them added to their fame, and augmented their power; the great works, which defended or adorned Egypt and Babylon, were erected by foreigners reduced to slavery. Hence the practice of carrying a whole people into captivity, and transporting a nation from one country to another.

ther. Such was the mode of the Egyptian and Assyrian kings. Thus the ten tribes of Israel were carried away by the king of Assyria, and the Jews by the king of Babylon.

The mode of exacting the tributes only from the conquered nations, favoured the prosperity of the eastern empires. Antient custom did not authorise the sovereign to levy taxes on the people. Cyrus and Cambyses contented themselves with the voluntary sums which the provinces presented; and Darius was the first monarch of Asia who, after many precautions, imposed a tax on his own subjects.

The manner of living also, in the East, during the times which I am now describing, was simple and unluxurious. Magnificence and expence were confined to public works, to the temples of the gods, and the palaces of kings. Viewed as the attributes of empire, and the distinction of sovereigns, or their satraps, they were neither contagious nor ruinous, nor descended to the lower orders of the people.

The wars too, carried on in Asia, though dreadful, were not lasting. As the eastern nations were inexpert in military operations, the success of an army was rapid, and one campaign was decisive. A single victory opened many provinces to the conqueror, and gave a new name to an empire.

Hence Asia was populous under the Assyrians, Medes and Persians, notwithstanding the wars it sustained, and the revolutions it underwent.

The history of the arts in Asia, both in antient and modern times, presents us with a very singular appearance. In the first ages they made a progress which astonishes us by its rapidity; but having attained a certain stage, they make no farther advances. Notwithstanding the duration of their empires, neither the Egyptians nor the Asiatics ever acquired new lights or graces, improved on their

early models, or brought their first efforts nearer to perfection. Their faculties appeared limited to a certain number of ideas, and to a narrow degree of knowledge, beyond which they never aspire. While in Europe the human genius is continually making advances, and striking out new inventions or improvements, in Asia it is stationary, and continues at the same point from which it set out. Every thing in the East remains immutable. The inhabitants of Asia have cultivated the fine arts from the earliest times; but a latter age never improved the models of a former; and their last efforts are as distant from perfection as their first. Notwithstanding the length of time in which they had cultivated astronomy, they could never calculate the eclipses of the sun or moon; although they had directed their genius to architecture, they never discovered the method of casting an arch. In poetry the same tropes and figures constantly recur. In painting we find a continual repetition of given forms. All human improvements were arrested in a certain stage of their career. This remarkable phenomenon arose probably from the following causes.

In all periods of their history, the Asiatics have carefully avoided intercourse with strangers, and treated them with contempt. They remain confined to their own country, and never travel into foreign kingdoms to enlighten their minds, or extend their ideas. The intercourse of one people with another has the same happy effect on the national character, that the intercourse of individuals has on the personal. Prejudices are dispelled; mutual communications are made; emulation is kindled; and a finer edge given to the faculties of the mind. A sequestered nation, like a solitary individual, can never be highly improved or refined. Variety and diversity of character call forth every intellectual exertion;

acuteness

acuteness directs application; research affords materials for philosophy; fancy embroiders the groundwork of reason; taste becomes the guide of genius; good sense governs the eccentric excursions of imagination; different tempers of men strike fire by collision: thus arts flourish, science improves, and individuals and nations, from a diversity or discord of character, find the true harmony of the social system. This connection of the Grecian republics with one another contributed to the improvement of arts in Greece. The same general commerce and intercourse of modern nations have given the people of Europe a great and a sudden ascendency: a variety of national character has occasioned new combinations of ideas; the rivalry of neighbouring nations has whetted the faculties of men, and opened new veins of ingenuity; the fine fancy of the Italians, the philosophic genius of the English, the elegant and correct taste of the French, and the indefatigable assiduity of the Germans, meeting from distant quarters, have happily united their common efforts, and, blending together, have accelerated the advancement of every art, whether of utility or of ornament, and carried literary excellence to a degree of improvement and perfection unknown to the antients. The exclusion from the intercourse of other nations, among the people of the East, fixed eternal obstacles to the progress of the arts and sciences.

Hereditary professions, which were established in Egypt and in all the East, extinguished that noble emulation and ambition, which is the animating soul of genius, and the true principle of excellence in all the arts. Without this impulse, the human mind languishes and loses its powers. When the son follows invariably the profession of his father, he remains contented with his original station, and never aspires to a more elevated or dignified rank.

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He regards the efforts of his ancestors not as specimens but as standards of excellence; and substituting industry for ingenuity, studies to copy and to imitate, without even the desire to excel. Hence the fine arts become like the mechanical: genius is fettered by precedents; and the waving line of fancy exchanged for a perpetual round of repetitions. The class of artisans were in the last and lowest of their casts or tribes, and all who composed it were held in contempt. A person of an inferior tribe, whatever merit he possessed, could never rise to a superior. In such a state of society, the spirit of emulation, the love of fame, and every sentiment of ambition, must have been extinguished or suppressed. Hence no painter, sculptor, or statuary, ever rose to eminence in Asia; nor was there any visible difference to be remarked between the productions of one artist and those of another.

A different way of thinking and of acting prevailed in Greece. An eminent painter, an ingenious architect, a skilful statuary, enjoyed among the Greeks the highest consideration, and the most flattering distinctions. The laurel was bestowed on them by the consenting voice of their country; and their names were celebrated by posterity at festivals and on public occasions. A city valued itself as much on having produced an artist celebrated for his talents, as for having given birth to a statesman or a general of the highest merit. To this elegant and liberal turn of mind, Greece owed that pre-eminence and superiority in the arts, which it enjoyed over other nations. Without this intercourse with other nations, without emulation and ambition, Asia has always continued the same; and the modern history of the arts, is a rep etition of the antient.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Of the PHŒNICIANS.

THE nations of antiquity, which I have hitherto described, were celebrated for their military enterprizes and splendid achievements. History will now present us with a less heroic but a more pleasing spectacle; a commercial people, whose ingenuity and industry surmounted the obstacles which Nature seemed to have opposed to their progress, and rendering the elements subservient to their use, connected the most remote regions with one another, and opened a new species of intercourse and correspondence among nations.

The origin of commerce is almost coeval with that of society. When tribes had abandoned their wandering life, and settled in fixed abodes, their new situation gave rise to new ideas and pursuits. They soon found that the sources from which they had formerly derived their subsistence, the spontaneous fruits of the earth, and the flesh of wild animals killed in the chace, were insufficient to maintain them, when their numbers were increased, and their situation more confined. Hence they were obliged to have recourse to the breeding of tame cattle and to the culture of the earth. Property being established and ascertained, men began to exchange one rude commodity for another. While their wants and their desires were confined within narrow bounds, they had no other idea of traffic but that of simple barter. The husbandman exchanged a part of his harvest for the cattle of the shepherd; the hunter gave the prey which he had caught at

the chace for the honey and the fruits which his neighbour had gathered in the woods. Thus commercial intercourse begins among the members of the same community. From the inequality and diversity with which the productions of nature are distributed in different countries, a more general correspondence was by degrees established between distant tribes and nations. No longer satisfied with the necessaries, they aspired to the conveniences, the accommodations, and the luxuries of life. As the objects of commerce became varied and multiplied, they invented a common measure or standard of the value of commodities: after different experiments of this kind among different nations, the precious metals, from their rarity, their beauty, their permanency, and facility of transportation, were universally adopted as the symbols of property, and the representatives of all the productions that are formed by nature, or fabricated by human industry. Commerce, thus introduced by the exchange of commodities between individuals, gradually diffused itself from city to city, and from kingdom to kingdom, till at last it comprehended and united the remotest regions of the earth, and the most distant nations of the world.

The traffic between one country and another was at first carried on by land. In the book of Job we read of the troops or caravans that set out from Tema and Sheba, two cities of Arabia. Joseph was sold by his brethren to a caravan of Ishmaelitish merchants who came from the country of Gilead, and were transporting on camels to Egypt their merchandise, which consisted of spices and other articles of luxury. Such is the mode in which trade is at present carried on in the Levant.

But no very extensive commerce can be establish-

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ed between remote nations as long as commodities are transported only by land carriage. Trade is indebted for its highest improvements to navigation, which, by exploring unknown seas, and discovering new countries, has made men acquainted with the productions of various climates, and opened a channel of communication between the different parts of the globe.

Egypt appears to be peculiarly adapted to maritime commerce. Local circumstances gave it a pre-eminence, and favoured its progress to the dominion of the sea. The country was every where intersected by canals, to correct the irregularities of the annual inundation, and render its periodical returns beneficial to the operations of agriculture. Though constructed solely for this purpose, they had another unforeseen but important tendency, to favour experiments in the naval art, and to facilitate, by means of water-carriage, that easy and expeditious communication between the several parts of a great kingdom, on which the benefits of internal trade must in a great measure depend. It was no less favourably situated for external commerce: on one side, the smooth surface of the Mediterranean, unagitated by tides, interspersed at small distances with a multitude of islands, and embraced by surrounding shores, invited them, even in the infant state of navigation, to an intercourse with Europe and the western parts of Asia; on the other side, the Red-sea, or Arabian gulph, opened a communication with the Indian continent and the south-east coast of Africa; while the isthmus of Suez presented by land an extensive market among the eastern nations for the productory manufactures of Egypt, as well as for the supply of its inhabitants with timber, metals, and other articles, which their own country did not produce.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding these incentives to industry, and advantages for trade, the Egyptians never rose to eminence as a maritime or commercial people. The Mediterranean sea was infested by the piracies of the Greeks, to whom they denied access to their ports. If in the earlier periods of their monarchy they acquired the sovereignty of the Red-sea, and ingrossed the trade of India, it was of short duration. The fertility and abundance of Egypt rendered the inhabitants independent of other nations. Applying to inland trade, and carrying on commerce by their caravans, they neglected navigation, and shut their ports against foreigners. Superstition inspired them with an aversion to the sea, which they regarded as the emblem of Typhon their evil genius, and the enemy of Osiris. To such a degree did the Egyptian priests carry this abhorrence, that they held mariners as impious and profane, and avoided all intercourse with them, after the rest of the nations had begun to frequent the ocean.

Other causes contributed to prevent the inhabitants of antient Egypt from applying to navigation. Their country produces no timber proper for the construction of ships; their sea-coasts are unhealthy, and deficient in good harbours; and the policy of their sovereigns prohibited intercourse with strangers. Naucratis, which had a communication with the sea by the Canopean mouth of the Nile, was the only place at which they were permitted to land.

The tribes who settled on the coasts of Palæstine are unquestionably the first who discovered the art of rendering navigation subservient to commerce. These people are mentioned in Scripture by the name of Canaanites, a word which, in the language of the East, signifies *merchants*. They were afterwards known to the Greeks by the name of Phœnicians, an appellation

appellation probably bestowed on them from the multitude of palms * which that country produced.

Phœnicia was bounded on the west by the Mediterranean, on the east by Syria, on the south by the mountain Anti-Lebanus, and on the north by the island of Araths. The most remarkable cities on the Phœnician coast were Tripolis, Byblus, Palæbyblus, Berytus, Sidon, Sarepta, and Tyre.

The inhabitants of this country are said to have migrated at an early period from the northern shores of the Arabian gulph. There they had lived in caverns formed by nature in the range of hills that ran along the sea-coast, and spread by degrees into the deserts, where they roamed without a fixed habitation, and found a temporary shelter under the branches of the thorn, or in the hollow of a rock. They were unacquainted with agriculture, and had no property in flocks or herds: by the sea-shore they lived on fish and marine animals; in the desert they fed on locusts, and the scanty fruits that grew wild in the woods. From this wretched way of life they were called Horites by the Hebrews, and Troglodites by the Greeks; both appellations alluding to their living in holes and caverns. Held in detestation by the other tribes, who were occupied in tending cattle or in cultivating the earth, necessity made them bold and inventive. They were the first that navigated the Red-sea on a wretched float made of the branches of trees fastened together, in order to procure a livelihood by fishing †. Such was the origin of a people, whose fame extended to the most distant climates, and has been transmitted to succeeding ages.

* Φοινιξ.

† Plin. lib. vii. cap. 56.

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Some of these tribes had settled on the coast of Palæstine before the vocation of Abraham *, and inhabited that part of it which extended from the lake of Genezareth to the Mediterranean. Here, immediately after their arrival, they applied themselves to navigation and commerce, and transported Egyptian and Assyrian commodities from one place to another in the Mediterranean. In a few ages they established such an extensive and flourishing trade, and attained such a knowledge of the earth and its inhabitants, as astonished the rest of mankind. Six centuries after the deluge, the maritime trade, wealth, and power of the Sidonians, had become so famous, as to be mentioned by the patriarch Jacob in his last benedictions to the twelve tribes †.

The character and genius of nations arise from their physical and political situation. The abundant fertility of Egypt, the want of timber to build ships, and their superstitious horror at the sea, prevented the inhabitants from applying to foreign trade, and limited their industry to improvements in agriculture and in land traffic. In like manner the barrenness of Phœnicia directed the attention of its inhabitants to maritime pursuits. Possessing only a narrow slip of land on the coast of the Mediterranean, and dependent for subsistence on the scanty productions of an ungrateful soil, the sea became their only resource. Fishing, their antient mode of subsistence, had taught them the art of navigation. The forests of Lebanon abounded with timber proper for the construction of ships. Nature had formed several commodious harbours on their coasts, which, for their greater security, they defended with moles. Their manufactures and exports of native produce

* Gen. xii. 6. xiii. 7.
† Gen. xlix. 13.

were

were not numerous, but they were valuable. The sea sand led them to discover the secret of making glass; their soil, notwithstanding its infertility, supplied the materials of fine linen; and their ingenuity fashioned curious productions in wood and metals. From the murex, which they caught in great plenty on their coasts, they extracted the rich dye of their famous purple, so highly valued by all the nations of antiquity. Thus they established a commerce for articles of taste and luxury, the most productive and beneficial of all.

As the Egyptians and Assyrians neglected or despised external commerce, the Phœnicians became the carriers of all nations, and derived from their own labours those blessings which Nature seemed to have denied them. Like the Venetians and the Dutch in modern times, necessity taught them inventions; deprived of natural advantages, they acquired that spirit of ingenious industry which is the parent of opulence; and destitute of rich possessions by land, they sought and obtained the dominion of the sea.

The form of their government also favoured the progress and success of the Phœnicians in commercial affairs. The same spirit of freedom and independence, by which they were actuated in the wilderness and on the shores of the Arabian gulph, continued to distinguish them when they lived under the government of princes in walled and fortified cities. Their country, though small, was divided into five petty principalities, each under its own chief, who, though invested with sovereign dignity, had not sufficient power to make encroachments on the rights and liberties of the subject. It is the secure possession of property from the invasions of despotism, that gives vigour to industry, and spirit to enterprize. Commerce must ever flourish most in republican

republican states, or in limited monarchies, where the possession of wealth raises to distinction in the state, and where the royal authority is exercised not for the oppression, but the protection of the subject.

No less conducive to their commercial prosperity and greatness, was the admirable policy of the Phœnicians in levelling all distinctions between natives and foreigners, and throwing their ports open to the whole world. The encouragement which they gave to the artists, manufacturers, and merchants of other nations, together with the freedom of their government, and the equity of their laws, tempted the most expert men in every profession to settle in their territories, and of course to contribute to their improvement and opulence.

Tros, Tyriusve mihi nullo discrimine agetur,

breathes the true spirit of Phœnician superiority to narrow prejudices, and was as distinguished an example of political toleration among the antients, as the similar conduct of the Dutch was of religious toleration in modern times. This liberal maxim had no small influence in making the city of Tyre the theatre of human ingenuity ; the first emporium to the nations of the known world ; and the grand repository of every thing which could administer to the necessities, the conveniences, and the luxuries of mankind.

The situation of the Phœnicians was admirably adapted to extend their commercial intercourse to every part of the earth : possessing a part of Asia, and placed on the confines of Africa and Europe, if they did not form a centre of interest and union to the inhabitants of the globe, they at least had it in their power to communicate to every nation the benefits of every climate. There were difficulties, however,

however, in ancient navigation, which prevented or retarded their establishing such an universal intercourse and commerce among nations. Of all the arts which have attracted the study or contemplation of mankind, none is more surprising in the rise, from its early efforts to its subsequent improvement, than that of navigation. From the small canoe, in which the Indian descends his native river, or ventures out into the adjacent ocean, to the noble and majestic edifice containing a thousand men, with provisions and accommodations for many months, and conveying all this vast apparatus on the wings of the wind, across immense seas, to the most distant shores, the progress is so prodigious and astonishing, as to give us the highest idea of the human powers when enlightened and enlarged by the experience of many centuries. As the first form of vessels adapted to navigation must have been extremely rude, the method of conducting them was no less awkward and defective. Skill, as well as experience, was required to assist the efforts of the rowers by the action of the winds. The method of arresting a ship in its course, by means of that simple, but admirable machine, the anchor, must have been long unknown. The discoveries of modern times, which, by ascertaining the polarity of the magnet, determined the distance from land, and trace the paths of the ocean, were concealed from the early mariners, who had no other method of directing their course, than by observing the course of the sun, and the position of the stars. Their navigation of consequence was timid and uncertain. They crept along the shores, and cautiously avoided losing sight of land. Years were requisite for performing voyages which are now finished in a few months. Even in the mildest climates, and on the calmest seas, it was only during the summer season that maritime enterprizes were pursued.

pursued. It would have been deemed hazardous to an extreme, by the antient mariners, to have braved the fury of the elements, and the surges of the ocean, during the winter months. Under all these disadvantages, however, the active and persevering spirit of the Phœnicians exerted itself in naval and commercial enterprizes. The history of this people furnishes a remarkable proof of the wonders which industry can perform, and of the opulence to which commerce can raise a nation which applies to it with ardour.

The first voyages which they performed were in the Mediterranean, of which they frequented all the ports. Coasting along the shores of this sea, they made settlements in the isles of Cyprus and Rhodes, and extending their navigation, passed successively into Greece, Thrace, Italy, Sicily, and Sardinia. Penetrating into the extremities of Europe, they visited the Gauls, discovered the southern part of Spain, and gave a name to that kingdom, which it still retains*.

Hitherto their navigation, like that of all the antient nations, had been confined to the Mediterranean; and the south of Spain was the boundary of their voyages. Passing the southern point of that country, the Phœnician sailors perceived that the Mediterranean communicated by a narrow channel with another sea. The dread of encountering unknown latitudes, and the perils which presented themselves in crossing this unexplored and formidable passage, long deterred the Phœnician pilots; but incited by the love of gain, and encouraged by their perpetual successes, about 1250 years before

* Spaniza, which the Romans have changed into *Hispania*, and we into Spain, signifies, in the Hebrew language, little different from the Phœnician, *full of rabbits.*

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the Christian era they ventered beyond the boundaries of antient navigation, and passing the straits of Gades, entered the ocean. Success crowned the boldness of the enterprize. They landed on the western coast of Spain. This first voyage was followed by others; and the Phœnicians soon sent colonies into the country, founded cities there, and formed permanent settlements. Their lucrative traffic to these regions induced them to erect, on an isle, known at present by the name of Cadiz, a fortified place, which they might employ as a repository or warehouse for the Spanish trade. To secure the possession of that isle, they built a city, to which, from the purposes of its erection, they gave the name of Cadiz *.

The advantages which the Phœnicians derived from this trade were sudden and extraordinary. Spain presented the same spectacle to its first visitants, that America presented to the Spaniards in the sixteenth century. The antient Spaniards like the Americans, were destitute of arts and industry. Their country abounded with gold and silver; but the inhabitants, unacquainted with the value of these precious metals, applied them to common uses †. The Phœnicians availed themselves of this ignorance. In exchange for oil, glass, and trinkets, so much coveted by barbarians, they received such a quantity of silver, that their ships could not contain the treasure. They were obliged to take out the lead with which their anchors were loaded, and put the silver in its place ‡.

The wealth which the Phœnicians drew from Spain was not confined to the precious metals. Wax, honey, vermilion, iron, lead, copper, and

* Refuge, inclosure, vid. Diodor. lib. v. p. 345. Bochar. in Canaan, lib. i. cap. 34. † Strabo, lib. iii. p. 224.

‡ Diodor. lib. v. p. 358.

above

above all, tin, were valuable articles of traffic. This last metal was unknown to other nations till it was introduced by the Phœnicians.

Spain was not the only country beyond the Pillars of Hercules into which the Phœnicians had penetrated. Accustomed to the navigation of the ocean, they extended their discoveries to the left of the straits of Gades, as far as to the right; and visiting the western coasts of Africa, formed settlements there, a little after the Trojan war *.

While the Phœnicians possessed the trade of the north and the west, they drew to themselves the commerce of the south and the east, which is said to have been opened by the Egyptians. Having become masters of several commodious harbours towards the bottom of the Arabian gulph, they established a regular intercourse with Arabia and the continent of India on the one hand, and with the eastern coast of Africa on the other. They landed the valuable cargoes which they brought from these opulent regions at Elath, the safest harbour in the Red-sea towards the north. Thence they were carried by land to Rhinocolura, the nearest port in the Mediterranean to the Arabian gulph; and being re-shipped in that harbour, were transported to the Phœnician capital. Thus the wealth of Persia, India, Africa, and Arabia, centered in Tyre, and thence was distributed over the western parts of the world †.

In order to secure the commerce of these countries which they had discovered or visited, the Phœnicians founded colonies and cities, in the most commodious situations, as far as their voyages extended. About eighty years after the Trojan war they founded the city of Gades, on a small island near the

* Strabo, lib. i. p. 83. † Strabo, lib. xvi. p. 1128.

western

western coast of Andalusia, and soon afterwards those of Adrymetum, Leptis, Utica, and Copsa, in Africa*. In their voyages to Greece, Thrace, and Italy, they built cities and planted colonies in Citium, Thera, Argos, Thebes, Samothrace, and Thasus. Soon after this we find Phœnician colonies on every island of the Mediterranean, in the Balearic isles, in Sardinia, Corsica, Sicily, Malta, and many parts of the northern coasts of Africa. The revolution which the conquests of Joshua made in the countries of Canaan was favourable to the colonization of the Phœnicians. After the irruption and devastation of the Hebrew tribes, the greater part of the antient inhabitants of Palæstine, finding themselves threatened with immediate destruction, endeavoured to save themselves by flight. Sidon offered them an asylum; but the territory of that city not sufficing to support the multitude of exiles, they were under a necessity of exploring unknown countries, and seeking new settlements. The Phœnicians lent them their ships, and employed this accession of subjects to extend their trade and to people their distant cities. Hence that vast number of colonies which, taking their departure from Phœnicia, soon after diffused themselves through all the skirts of Africa and countries of Europe†.

No event is more remarkable in the Phœnician history, than the foundation of a new state on the African coast about 890 years before the Christian era. The foundation and growth of *Carthachadta*‡, or the New Town, have been adorned by poetical fiction; but its consequent greatness made an impor-

* Vell. Paterc. lib. i. cap. 2.
† Bochar. Canaan, &c.
‡ Abbreviated into Karchedon by the Greeks, and pronounced Carthago by the Romans.

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tant figure in the history of the world. Situated on a bold projection of the African coast, in the very centre of the Mediterranean, Carthage comprehended within her view the east, as well as the west, and embraced, by the extent of her commerce, all the seas, and all the countries of the known world. An excellent port offered a secure asylum to ships: the natural fertility of the adjacent soil; the happy site of the town, surrounded by a cluster of islands and countries conveniently situated for commerce; the adventurous spirit of the merchants and mariners; the skill and industry of the artisans; together with the wisdom of the government, which was never shaken by seditions, nor oppressed by tyranny, till the later periods of the commonwealth; all contributed to the sudden increase and rapid improvement of the Carthaginian colony. From the enlargement of its territory it became a separate state, which soon rivalled and afterwards surpassed the mother country; and, in a duration of seven hundred years, comprehended within its dominion the finest portion of Africa, as well as a great part of Spain, Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, Malta, with the Balearic, and the Fortunate Islands.

From the enumeration of the countries to which the Phœnicians traded, of the cities which they built, and the colonies which they planted, in the various and distant parts of the world, an idea may be formed of the greatness and extent of their commerce. As in antient times the nations of the earth had little intercourse or connection with each other, the Phœnicians were employed as factors and carriers to all their neighbours, and became masters of all the trade that was carried on in the known world. Their ships conveyed the productions of every climate: and the empire of the sea was in their possession. Other nations applied to them

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when any great maritime enterprise or distant expedition was to be undertaken. The fleets which Solomon fitted out, to sail from the Red-sea to Ophir and Tarshish, probably on the eastern coast of Ethiopia, were conducted by Phœnician pilots, who had been accustomed to visit these countries before the time of Solomon. It was to Phœnician mariners that Necho, king of Egypt, above 610 years before Christ, gave the extraordinary commission to circumnavigate Africa. That prince sent a Phœnician fleet from the borders of the Red-sea, with injunctions to keep along the African coasts, to make the tour of them, and to return to Egypt by entering the Mediterranean at the Pillars of Hercules or Straits of Gibraltar. The Phœnicians taking their departure from the Red-sea, entered the Southern Ocean, and constantly followed the coasts. After having employed two seasons in this navigation, they doubled the southern promontory of Africa, and arriving at the Pillars of Hercules, entered the Mediterranean, and reached the mouths of the Nile in the third year of their voyage.*

Sacred and profane history agree in extolling the opulence and power of the Phœnicians. When the Israelites invaded Palæstine, gold and silver abounded in that country; magnificence and luxury reigned in private apartments; the sovereigns of the little districts into which it was divided, were clothed in purple; the people wore golden ear-rings; and even the camels were adorned with studs, chains, and plates of gold. The Babylonian cloak, the most superb article of dress among the Romans, in the period of their greatest luxury, was frequent among the spoils of Canaan†. At the time of the Trojan war, the immense riches of

* Herodot. lib. iv. cap. 42.

† Joshua and Judges, passim.

Sidon were diffused among the neighbouring nations, and supplied them with all that could contribute to regal pomp and ostentatious magnificence.* The commerce, opulence, and splendour of Phœnicia, continued to increase till the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, present a picture of Tyre in these distant ages, and celebrate the mart of nations with that enthusiasm and sublimity which distinguish the language of Inspiration.

"Tyre inhabits the isle which the merchants of Sidon, who pass over the sea, have replenished. The harvest of the river is her revenue, and she is a mart of nations. She is the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, and whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth.† Proud city, that art situate at the entry of the sea! thou hast said in thy heart, I am of perfect beauty. Thou hast extended thy commerce to distant islands, among the inhabitants of unknown coasts. Thou makest the fir-trees of Sannir into ships; the cedars of Lebanon are thy masts; the oaks of Bashan are thy oars. Thy sailors are seated upon the box-wood of Cyprus, inlaid with ivory. Thou hast spread forth the fine linen of Egypt to be thy sails and streamers; thy garments are dyed with the blue and purple of Hellas‡. Sidon and Arvad send thee their rowers; Gebal§ her skilful ship-builders; thy mathematicians and thy sages guide thy galleys; all the ships of the sea, with their mariners, are employed in thy commerce. The chosen men of Persia, Lydia, and Egypt, compose thine army; thy walls are hung round with their shields and their helmets. The sons of Arvad line thy parapets; and thy towers, guarded by the

* Hom. Iliad, lib. vi. ver. 289, lib. xxiii. ver. 743; and Odyss. lib. iv. ver. 154. lib. v. ver. 114.

† Isaiah xxiii. Ezek. xxvii.

‡ The Archipelago. § New Djebila.

Djimedeans,

Djimedeans,* glitter with their brilliant quivers. All the countries of the world stretch out their hands to trade with thee. Tarshish supplies thee with her multitude of riches, and sends to thy market silver, iron, tin, and lead. Ionia, Tubal†, and Meschech‡, furnish thee with slaves and vessels of brass. Armenia sends thee mules, horses, and horsemen. The Arabians of Dedan§ convey thy merchandise. Thy trade extends to many isles, who, in exchange for thy manufactures, present thee with ivory and ebony. Syria sends her traders to thy markets, and brings thee rubies, purple, embroidered work, fine linen, coral, and agate. Judah and Israel furnish thee with fine wheat, cheese, honey, oil, and balm. Damascus supplies thee with the wine of Helban, and the whitest of wool. Dan and Ionia offer to thy merchants polished iron, cinnamon, and the aromatic reed. The Arabians of Dedan bring thee rich carpets. The inhabitants of the desert, the princes of Kedar, exchange their lambs and their goats for thy precious merchandise. The Arabs of Saba and Rama‖ enrich thee with aromatics, precious stones, and gold. The natives of Haran, of Kalana¶, and of Eden**, the merchants of Sheba††, the Assyrians, and the Chaldeans, frequent thy markets, and sell thee ornamental foldings, embroidered stuffs, and chests of rich apparel; the ships of Tarsus rejoice in thy ports; thou art replenished and made glorious in the midst of the seas. Never was any city like unto thee: thou hast enriched the nations, and the

* A Phœnician people.

† Tubal, or Tiblis, is on the frontiers of Georgia, famous for exporting slaves.

‡ The country of the Mosques.

§ Between Aleppo and Damascus.

‖ In the Yemen.

¶ In Mesopotomia.

** Adana, near to Tarsus.

†† Near the Dedan.

kings of the earth. Who is equal to Tyre, the queen of the ocean?"

The Phœnicians, like the other nations of Canaan, were governed by petty princes; and their territory, circumscribed as it was, included the kingdoms or states of Sidon, Tyre, Aradus, Berytus, and Byblus. Sidon, the most ancient city, and the capital of Phœnicia, for a long time enjoyed the sovereignty and engrossed the trade of the Mediterranean. Homer, as has been observed by Strabo*, who makes no mention of Tyre, celebrates Sidon, and alludes to the opulence and extensive commerce of the inhabitants. Vestiges of this antient metropolis are still to be traced in the modern city of Sayde. Without the walls, and among the gardens adjacent to the present town, beautiful columns, magnificent piles of ruins, and venerable fragments of antiquity, impress the mind of the traveller with an idea of the antient greatness and splendour of Sidon.

Tyre, pronounced by the Orientals Tsour, or Sour, was built on a rock (as the name indicates in the Phœnician language) about twenty miles to the southward of Sidon. The colony which settled in this strong hold, and which soon surpassed the parent city, laid the foundation of its power and opulence two hundred and forty years before the building of Solomon's temple. They made choice of this situation, from the double advantage of a place which might be easily defended, and the convenience of the adjacent road, which could contain and cover a great number of vessels. Three different cities were distinguished by this name at three different periods, Tyre on the Continent, Tyre on the Island, and Tyre on the Peninsula, after the island was joined to the continent. Monuments of the

* Lib. xvi. p. 1079.

antient

antient city on the sea-coast still remain, particularly the extraordinary aqueduct which is called Solomon's Well, and is supplied by one of the subterraneous rivers so frequently found in Syria. Three of the cisterns are still entire. The first is an octagon, sixty feet in diameter. The surrounding wall is composed of gravel and pebbles, but so firmly consolidated by a strong cement, that it seems to be an entire piece of rock. To the south this stonework rises about eighteen feet from the ground, and fifteen to the north. The column of water which fills the cistern, is fifteen feet higher than the ground; ascending at the top with the force of a torrent, it rushes through channels formed at the surface of the well. It is so abundant as to drive three mills in the neighbourhood, and form a little rivulet before it reaches the sea. On the east side an aqueduct, raised about six yards from the ground, and containing a channel one yard wide, runs from the cistern to the other two, and receiving their waters by small channels, was continued several miles to the isthmus, over which it extended into the island. The idea of confining a subterraneous river, and forcing it to rise from its bed, was worthy of the ingenious and enterprizing spirit of the Phœnicians.

When Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had besieged and taken Jerusalem, he meditated the destruction of Tyre, the only city which continued to brave his power. The Tyrians resisted this powerful conqueror for thirteen years; at last they resolved to place the sea between them and their enemy, and passed accordingly into the opposite island, at the distance of half a mile from the town.

Tyre on the Island was destroyed by Alexander the Great, but afterwards rebuilt. Her new inhabitants profited by the mole by which the Macedonians had made themselves a passage to the island. The sea, by covering this mole with sand, enlarged it

it by successive accumulations, and formed the isthmus which joins the island to the continent. The modern village of Sour is situated at the junction, and contains about fifty poor families, who inhabit wretched huts, and subsist by fishing.

Aradus, formerly a powerful city and free state, was built on an island about twenty furlongs from the shore. Their boundaries being narrow, the inhabitants raised the numerous buildings to an extraordinary height, so that, according to Strabo, they contained more stories than those of Rome. The liberty enjoyed by the inhabitants rendered it populous, and it flourished in naval commerce, manufactures, and arts. The ingenuity of the inhabitants discovered a spring at the bottom of the sea, from which they drew water when the town was besieged, by means of a leaden bell, and a long tube fitted to its bottom.* It is known by the name of Rouad, and contains nothing but the mutilated remains of antient habitations

Berytus, which the modern Arabians pronounce Bairout, was situated on a plain, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, which runs out into the sea, narrowing to a point, about two leagues from the ordinary line of the shore. Under the Roman emperors it was celebrated as an academy, in which the civil law was taught in Greek, as it was at Rome in Latin. It still continues to be the emporium of the Maronites and the Druzes, where they export their cottons and silks that are destined for Cairo. The port, which is formed by a pier, like all the others on the coast, is, like them, choaked up with sands and ruins. Without the walls, shafts of columns, and other venerable relics of antiquity, are found, which indicate the former magnificence of Berytus.

Byblus, said to have been the first city built in

* Strabo, lib. xvi. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. ii. & v.

the

the country, was celebrated for the worship of Venus, and for the religious festival in which the women lamented the death of Adonis.

Beside these independent and sovereign states, other cities of Phœnicia are distinguished in history. Tripoli, as the name imports, was founded by three colonies from Sidon, Tyre, and Aradus, who each of them formed settlements within a furlong of each other, which were surrounded by a common inclosure, and became one city. It still retains its antient name, and forms a pachalic, or government, under the dominion of the Turks. It is situated on the margin of the river Kadisha, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, which overlooks and surrounds it with its branches to the east and the south. It is separated from the sea by a small triangular plain, half a league in breadth, at the point of which is the village, where the vessels land their goods. To the southward of this plain, the shore is full of the ruins of habitations, and columns broken and buried in the earth or in the sea-sands.

The town of Laodicea, founded by Seleuchus Nicator, is situated at the base, and on the southern side of a small peninsula, which projects half a league into the sea. The port is a kind of bason, environed by a mole, the entrance of which is narrow. It might contain twenty-five or thirty vessels; but the Turks have suffered it to be choaked up in such a manner, as scarcely to admit four. The modern name is Latakia. In the time of Strabo it exported its famous wines, the produce of the adjacent mountains, to Egypt, by the way of Alexandria. It now carries on a great commerce, consisting chiefly of tobacco, of which upwards of twenty cargoes are annually sent to Damietta; the returns from thence are rice, which is bartered in Upper Syria for oils and cottons.

Of the kings or chieftains who presided over the

Phœnician states, those of Sidon, Tyre, and Aradus, were the most conspicuous for political consequence, and make the most distinguished figure in history. But the records of their respective reigns, though carefully kept, as we are informed by Josephus, have now perished; and of the Phœnician history, a few fragments only remain. The genius of a commercial people is pacific rather than military. Engaged in maritime enterprises, and commercial pursuits, the people of Tyre and Sidon profited by the conquests of their neighbours, without taking a part in their quarrels. We find frequent allusions to the flourishing state of the Sidonians and Tyrians in sacred and profane history, but little mention is made of their kings or their public transactions.

During the reign of Cambyses, Phœnicia was annexed to the Persian empire, and the Phœnician fleets assisted that monarch in his conquest of Egypt. In the celebrated wars between the Greeks and Persians, Tetramnestes, the Sidonian prince, assisted Xerxes, in his expedition against Greece, with three hundred galleys; and is ranked by Herodotus among the chief commanders of the Persian navy.

A regular series of events in the annals of Tyre and Sidon is not to be obtained, but a few events in their history will serve to explain the genius and character of the people.

Under the reign of Darius Ochus, the Phœnician states, unable to bear the oppression and tyranny of their Persian governor, entered into a league with Nectanebis, king of Egypt, and rose in arms against the Persian monarch. In order to remove the seat of war from his own dominions, Nectanebis sent four thousand Greeks to the assistance of the Phœnicians, under the care of Mentor the Rhodian. Tennes, at that time king of Sidon, had raised a numerous army, and fitted out a powerful fleet. Being joined by

by the Grecian auxiliaries, he obtained a victory over the governors of Syria and Cilicia, and expelled the Persians from his territories. Alarmed at the progress of the Phœnician host, Ochus repaired in person to the frontiers of Sidon with an army of three-hundred thousand foot, and thirty thousand horse. The approach of so great an armament shook the fidelity of Mentor the Rhodian. Accordingly he entered into a secret treaty with the Persian king, promising to deliver Sidon into his hands, and even engaged Tennes to be a partner in his treason.

Meanwhile the Sidonians were preparing for a gallant defence, and with that desperate valour which marks the character of a free people, had set fire to all their ships at the approach of the Persian troops, reducing themselves to the last alternative of the brave, that of conquering, or perishing in the ruins of their city. But all their efforts were vain; for when the Persians drew near the walls, Tennes, under the pretence of going to the general assembly of the Phœnicians, went with six hundred of the principal citizens to the Persian camp, and delivered them into the hands of Ochus, who immediately put them to death as the authors of the rebellion. Five hundred other citizens of high rank, who arrived soon after with olive-branches in their hands, were also put to the sword. Ochus and Tennes then marched at the head of the Persian army towards the city, and were admitted without opposition by Mentor, who held possession of one of the gates. The treachery of Tennes had struck terror into the Sidonians; but when they found themselves a second time betrayed, and saw the enemy within their walls, they abandoned themselves to despair, and shutting themselves up in their houses, set them on fire. Forty thousand men, beside women and children, perished in this conflagration. Tennes did not survive the ruins of his country; for the Persian king

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detesting the traitor, though he had profited by his treason, ordered him to be put to death. At the time of this disaster Sidon abounded with gold and silver, which being melted down in the flames, Ochus sold the ashes of the city for a prodigious sum of money. The destruction of Sidon struck an alarm into the neighbouring states, which immediately submitted to the conqueror, and all Phœnicia was again brought under the Persian yoke. The city was afterwards rebuilt, and the government of it committed to Strato. It continued subject to Ochus and his successors, till the Persian empire, with its appendages, were conquered by Alexander the Great.

Tyre, called in sacred Scripture the daughter of Sidon, was built on the continent 1252 years before the Christian era. No authentic memorials remain of its princes till the reign of Abeimal, cotemporary with David, and father of Hiram. The latter prince cultivated a friendly intercourse with the Hebrew monarch, and assisted him in building a palace at Jerusalem. On the accession of Solomon to the throne of his father, Hiram sent a congratulatory embassy to the new king, and furnished him with cedars from Lebanon, and skilful artificers, to build a temple to the Lord. This celebrated structure, the pride of Judea, and the ornament of the East, was indebted for its majesty and splendour to the ingenuity and opulence of the Tyrians. When Solomon aimed to enrich his country by a share in the Indian and African trade, which was carried on by the Red-sea, Hiram generously furnished him with ship-builders to equip a fleet, and with Phœnician pilots and mariners to conduct his vessels to the ports of Ophir and Tarshish. The kingdom of Tyre flourished in the reign of Hiram. He enlarged the boundaries of the city, built temples to Hercules and Astarte, and engaged in military expeditions, which were crowned with success.

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In the reign of Pygmalion, his sister Elisa, or Dido, fled from Tyre, and founded Carthage on the coast of Africa. This story is founded on truth, though it has been embellished by the fancy of the poets.

When Elulæus was in possession of the throne, many cities dependent on Tyre, aspiring to throw off her dominion, had recourse to Salmanasar, king of Assyria. That monarch esponsed their interests, and declared war against the Tyrians. He equipped a fleet of sixty sail; but that armament was beaten by a Tyrian squadron, consisting only of twelve ships. This action rendered the Tyrians so formidable at sea, that Salmanasar durst no more encounter them on that element. He judged it more advantageous to attack them by land, and formed the siege of Tyre, which he afterwards converted into a blockade. The inhabitants were in time reduced to great distress, because the Assyrians had stopped up the aqueducts, and intercepted all the conduits which conveyed water into the city. The Tyrians, by digging wells, were enabled to hold out for the space of five years, when, Salmanasar dying, the Assyrians raised the siege.

In the reign of Ithobal, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, marched into Syria and besieged Tyre. Enriched by commerce, and elated with power, that city resisted, for thirteen years, the victorious monarch to whose arms the rest of Asia had submitted. Before they were reduced to the last extremity, as I have already mentioned, the inhabitants withdrew from the city, and removed their valuable effects into a neighbouring isle. Having become master of an empty city, the disappointed monarch vented his rage upon the deserted buildings, which he razed to the ground, and the few remaining inhabitants, whom he put to the sword. This resistance was fatal to the army of the Chaldean conqueror;

but the spirit of the Tyrians remained invincible. Having escaped the fury of their conqueror, they built on the adjacent isle a new city, which soon obliterated the remembrance of the old.* From the ashes of that proud city a phœnix arose, little inferior in beauty to its parent. New Tyre, situated on the island, soon became mistress of the sea, and held that empire, without a rival, till the time of Alexander the Great.

During this interval Tyre flourished in opulence and power, and extended her dominion over the other Phœnician states, whom she rendered tributary. But the Macedonian conqueror was destined to change the form of human affairs, and to transfer to Europe the dominion of Asia. After the battle of Issus, Alexander directed his march along the Phœnician coast. Aradus and Sidon immediately opened their gates, and submitted to the yoke. The Tyrians sent an embassy of their most illustrious citizens, among whom was the son of their king, with presents for Alexander, and provisions for his army. But when that conqueror expressed his eager desire to enter their city, and to offer sacrifice to Hercules, its tutelary god, they communicated to him their determined resolution, "that neither the Persians nor the Macedonians should ever enter their walls." Provoked with this answer, Alexander resolved to form the siege of Tyre, which the inhabitants were determined to sustain with the utmost vigour. The strength of this commercial capital was great. It was surrounded and defended on all sides by the sea: the walls exceeded a hundred feet in height, and extended eighteen miles in circumference; the magazines abounded with military and naval stores; and the Carthaginians, whose ambassadors were at that time in the city, had engaged to succour the

* Joseph. lib. viii. cap. 2. Lib. ix. cap. 14.

parent

parent state. Alexander, whose activity was stimulated, not repressed, by the difficulty of an undertaking, determined to become master of the place, and, by obtaining the dominion of the sea, to open his way to greater conquests. The city was inaccessible to assailants, but by a bank or mole carried on from the continent to the island. Accordingly he undertook this astonishing work. The ruins of old Tyre supplied him with stones; Anti-Libanus furnished him with wood; and the neighbouring inhabitants assisted his numerous army in this arduous labour. The Macedonians began to raise the mole with great alacrity; but when they approached the city, they were much incommoded by the depth of water, and exceedingly galled by darts and missile weapons thrown from the battlements. The Tyrians, likewise, having the command of the sea, annoyed the workmen from their galleys, and retarded the execution of their plan. To resist these assaults, Alexander erected, on the farthest projecture of the bank, two wooden towers, on which he placed engines, and which he covered with leather and raw hides, to resist the ignited darts and fireships of the enemy. Meanwhile the besieged employed the most ingenious stratagems to destroy the advancing works. Having procured a transport vessel, they filled it with dry twigs, sulphur, pitch, and other combustible materials. Towards the prow they raised two masts, from whose extremities were suspended vast cauldrons of oil, to add violence to the conflagration. Taking advantage of a favourable wind, they conducted this instrument of destruction into the sea by the assistance of their galleys. Approaching to the wooden towers, the rowers set fire to the vessel, and escaped by swimming. The works of the Macedonians were soon consumed, while the soldiers, throwing down their arms, leapt into the sea. The be-

sieged venturing out of the city in boats, beat down the edges of the mole, tore up the stakes, and set fire to the engines. Thus the labour of many weeks was in one day reduced to ruins.*

Disappointed, but not dejected, Alexander immediately ordered a new mole to be raised on a larger scale than the former. The commands of a prince, who was present on all occasions, and directed every operation in person, were soon obeyed. By rapid and incredible exertions the mole advanced to the island, and battering engines were erected. Sensible that all his efforts to take the city would be unavailing while the Tyrians commanded at sea, Alexander assembled the fleets of the Phœnician cities which he had subdued. At the same time he was joined by the naval forces of Rhodes and Cyprus, so that his armament now amounted to two hundred and twenty-four vessels. The Macedonian prince then ordered the Cyprian fleet to take its station before the harbour which lay towards Sidon, and that of Phœnicia before the opposite port which looked towards Egypt. He then determined to attack the city on every side. Military engines of all kinds were placed on the bank, in order to shake the walls with battering-rams, and to hurl on the besiegers arrows, stones, and burning torches.

The boldness and perseverance of the Tyrians in making an obstinate defence, were no less conspicuous than the invincible intrepidity of Alexander in making the attack. From wooden towers, newly erected on their lofty battlements, they discharged ignited arrows, and other missile weapons, on the galleys that were advancing the battering engines against the city. They fenced the foo. of the wall with great stones to prevent the Greeks from approaching it. While the Macedonians were at-

* Arrian. p. 44, &c.

tempting

tempting to remove these incumbrances, the Tyrians advanced with covered galleys, and cut the cables which held the ships at anchor. Alexander commanded a squadron to advance and repel the Tyrians. Yet even this was not effectual; for the islanders being expert divers, plunged under water, and again cutting the cables, set the Macedonian vessels adrift. Iron chains were then prepared instead of ropes; the ships being secured in firm anchorage, the fence of stones was removed from the foot of the walls. The battering engines were then advanced; and the Tyrians, invested on all sides, were attacked at the same time both by sea and land.

In this extremity, the Tyrians resolved to attack the Cyprian fleet, stationed at the mouth of the harbour which looked towards Sidon. But the vigilance of Alexander defeated the daring design; and this unsuccessful sally served only to accelerate the fate of Tyre. The terror of the hostile fleet being removed, the Macedonians advanced their engines on all sides, and prepared for a general assault. During two days the attack and the defence were equally vigorous; the besiegers displaying the ardour of troops accustomed to victory, the besieged the fury of men driven to despair. From towers equal in height to the walls, the Macedonians fought hand in hand with the foe. By throwing spontoons across, they sometimes passed over even to the battlements. In other parts the Tyrians employed new-invented hooks and grappling irons to remove the assailants. But what galled them most of all, was the burning sand which the islanders showered upon them from brazen shields heated in the fire. This, entering the crevices of their armour, penetrated to the bone, and tormented them to such excess, that many threw themselves headlong into the sea. But the perseverance of the Macedonian conqueror was not to be exhausted. On the third day the engines assailed

the walls; and the fleet, divided into two squadrons, attacked the opposite harbours. A breach being effected a hundred feet wide, the scaling ladders advanced, that the soldiers might enter the town over the ruins. The targeteers, headed by Admetus, first mounted the breach. This brave commander was slain; but Alexander, who was ever present in the midst of danger, immediately followed with the royal band of Companions. At the same time the Phœnician and the Cyprian fleets broke into the harbours. After their walls were taken, the Tyrians rallied in a place called Agenor, and prepared to defend themselves to the last. The long resistance of the besieged, which retarded the progress of the Macedonian conquests, and the barbarity of the Tyrians, who having taken some Grecian vessels, massacred their crews on the top of the battlements, and threw their bodies into the sea, exasperated the fury of Alexander and his victorious army. The city was burned to the ground; eight thousand of the inhabitants were put to the sword; thirty thousand were sold as slaves; and two thousand fixed on crosses along the sea-shore.

Thus fell the city of Tyre, no more to retrieve its antient splendour. The struggle of the inhabitants, though unsuccessful, was glorious; and Alexander the Great found it more difficult to subdue this little island, than to overturn the Persian empire.

The ingenuity of the Phœnicians, and their fame for manufactures and arts, have been celebrated by all antiquity. Too much of this praise, however, is conveyed in general terms; and history has left us in the dark with regard to particulars. A people who subsisted by commerce and navigation, must have understood the principles of arithmetic, geometry, mechanics, geography, and astronomy.

The first ideas of navigation must have originated from those tribes who were situated on the sea-coast,

or near the mouths of rivers, where they fell into the ocean. In warm climates bathing is a common refreshment and recreation; and that terror at the sea, which is felt by the inhabitants of inland regions, is unknown to those who live on the coast, and who venture on the watery element like the terrestrial animals that swim spontaneously. The construction of canoes for sailing on lakes and rivers is known to the rudest tribes of savages. The first ships were probably of a similar form. But experience would soon convince the early mariners, that vessels designed for navigating the seas ought to be of a different construction from those intended for rivers. They would therefore make it their study to give such a form and solidity to their ships, as would enable them to resist the impetuosity of the winds and waves. They would next endeavour to find out a method of guiding and directing them with ease and safety. Sculls and oars would be employed for this purpose before the use of the helm, which must have been a later invention. The action of the wind, the effects of which are so frequent and so striking, would suggest the use of sails, which was probably the last improvement in the construction of ships. As the first navigators only coasted along the shore, and cautiously avoided losing sight of land, sails would have been more dangerous than useful. It required the experience of several ages to teach mariners the art of employing the wind in accelerating the motion of ships.

This invention is generally ascribed to the Phœnicians. As their navigation extended, they improved the construction of their vessels, and discovered the advantage which they might draw from the aerial element in facilitating and shortening their voyages. In the remote and difficult navigations which they undertook; they employed sails when the weather

was

was favourable, and had recourse to oars during calms, or when the wind was adverse.

The Phœnicians employed two sorts of vessels of a very different construction, the one destined for commerce, the other for naval expeditions. Their ships of war, which served as a model to other nations, were long and pointed, and distinguished by the name of *Arco*. Their merchant-ships, called *Gauloi*, approached to a round form. That mode of constructing vessels accorded with the state of navigation in these remote times. As they rowed along the coasts, and followed the windings of the shore from one point of land to another, they could not give much depth to their vessels*; and they endeavoured to gain in breadth what they lost in depth.

The methods which they observed in directing their navigation to distant regions and on unknown seas, are not transmitted to us by history. From the moment that men began to observe the motion of the heavenly bodies, they would discern, that in that part of the heavens which is never marked with the sun's orbit, there are certain stars which appear constantly every night. It was easy to discover the position of these stars in respect to our earth. They appear always on the left hand of the observer, whose face is turned to the east. Navigators soon availed themselves of this discovery, as these stars constantly pointed out the same part of the world. Antiquity gives the honour of this discovery to the industrious and enterprizing spirit of the Phœnicians. The Great Bear would probably be the first guide which these antient mariners made choice of to direct their course. This constellation is easily distinguished both by the brightness and the peculiar arrangement

* Tacit. Annal. lib. ii. cap. 6.

of

of the stars which compose it. Placed near the pole, it hardly ever sets, with respect to those countries which the Phœnicians frequented. The northern stars were observed as the guides of navigation in very antient times. The Great Bear is mentioned in the book of Job, who seems to have conversed much with merchants and navigators. The name by which that constellation was known among the antient inhabitants of Greece, and the tales which they related about its origin, prove that it was observed for the direction of mariners in very remote ages.

This constellation points out the pole only in a vague and confused manner. Sensible of this inconvenience, the Phœnicians searched in the heavens some point that would serve to direct their course in a more precise and certain manner. They perceived a lesser constellation of the same figure nearer the pole, which they distinguished by the name of Ursa Minor, or the Lesser Bear, and chose a bright star in it to be their guide and their point of knowledge. Aided by this discovery, they early undertook distant voyages, and explored unknown regions.

The arts and literature of the Phœnicians partook of their character, and arose from their situation. They excelled in the manufactures that required ingenuity and administered to luxury. The glass of Sidon, the purple of Tyre, and their fine linen which was so much celebrated, were the product of their own country, and their own inventions. For their extraordinary skill in working of metals, in hewing of timber and stone, and their knowledge of what was solid and elegant in architecture, I need only remind the reader of the large share they had in erecting and adorning the temple of Solomon at Jerusalem. So remarkable and celebrated were they for their proficiency in the arts, that whatever was elegant, graceful, or pleasing, in the ornaments of dress, or the decoration of houses, was distinguished,

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by way of excellence, with the epithet of *Sidonian.* They made improvements in arithmetic, astronomy, and the art of writing. Commerce necessarily required registers, with easy and permanent signs to fix these registers. Hence their alphabet became the most complete and useful of antiquity, as it expressed the vowels in which the Egyptian and Chaldean was deficient. The Egyptians, and the civilized nations of Asia, sought rather to conceal than to communicate their discoveries. The commercial spirit of the Phœnicians taught them a more enlightened and liberal policy. Their own prosperity was connected with the improvement of other nations; and, by settling colonies in the countries which they frequented, they planted the seeds of refinement. Herodotus informs us, that the followers of Cadmus brought many doctrines and discoveries into Greece. The Curetes, who were skilled in the arts and sciences of Phœnicia, settled in Phrygia, Crete, Rhodes, Samothrace, Eubœa, Lemnos, and Ætolia, where they taught the inhabitants the improvements of civil life. The Phœnician alphabet was imparted to the Greeks and the Carthaginians, by whom it was diffused over the western world.

Although the genius of the Phœnicians turned more to objects of utility than of curiosity, it is among them that we find the first traces of a philosophical system concerning the origin and formation of the world. Sanchoniatho, of whom Eusebius has preserved a valuable fragment, has transmitted to us the antient traditions and belief of the Phœnicians, and traced the history of the arts and the discoveries in the first ages. From antient writings, particularly those of Thaut, the Egyptian Mercury, he extracted the theory which he has delivered concerning the arrangement of the chaos, the original state of the world, and the earliest events which befel its inhabitants. He admits two principles, a chaos

chaos without form or order*, and a Spirit or Intelligence endowed with goodness, who arranged the earth in its present form. Such speculations, at an æra so remote, argue an enlightened and polished people, who had been accustomed to reasoning and research. Indeed, the nearer we go to the ages bordering on the creation, the stronger traces we find of those primitive religious truths, which the presumption and vanity of man have in vain endeavoured afterwards to obscure.

Moschus of Sidon, who, according to Strabo †, wrote about the time of the Trojan war, furnishes us with the most antient example of sceptical philosophy. He taught that the world was produced by a fortuitous concourse of atoms; a system which, many ages afterwards, Epicurus introduced into Greece. The name of Kirjath-Sepher, or City of Letters and Records, which we find in the book of Joshua, shews that literature had been cultivated in Phœnicia from the earliest ages.

The worship of the heavenly bodies, particularly of the sun and moon, appears to be the natural religion, or rather superstition, of mankind. The chief deities of the Phœnicians, according to their own records, were Beelsamen, or Lord of Heaven, the name which they gave to the sun; Astarte, or the moon; Apollo, and Melcartus, or Hercules. As the great object of their idolatry, the Sun, daily presented himself to their eyes, in all his splendour, it is probable that at first they paid their adorations to the luminary itself, though afterwards they represented it by idols which they placed in their temples. Astarte was represented like Isis with horns, to denote the increase of the moon, and was adored under

* Lib. v. cap. 58. † Lib. xvi. p. 1098.

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the title of the Queen of Heaven. Melcartus, or Hercules, was the antient god of Tyre, the Tyrians reckoning him as old as their city, which, according to their own account, had existed 2300 years. They expressed a particular veneration for this deity, but represented him under no form, and placed no images in his temple. Adonis, or Tammuz, may also be placed among their divinities. The ceremonies performed in honour of the Egyptian Osiris and the beautiful Adonis were almost the same. They had both their disappearance or death; there was a search after both with mourning, and the discovery of both was attended with joy and gladness; so that the one superstition appears to have been borrowed from the other. This fable shews, that allegory was early introduced into the superstition of the antients. Adonis, with whom Venus was enamoured, was slain by a wild boar. The goddess, unspeakably afflicted with the news, followed her lover to the shades, and demanded him from Proserpine, who, after some difficulties, agreed that he should have permission every year to be six months with Venus. Upon this she returned with joy to the earth, and instituted a festival in commemoration of the event. In consequence of this mysterious tradition, the women, especially at Byblus, mourned annually the death of Adonis, and rejoiced for his restoration to life. Macrobius, who with much sagacity has explained the mysteries of antient religion, thus allegorises this history*. "Attentively considering the Syrian or Phœnician religion, we cannot doubt but that Adonis signifies the sun. Venus represents the upper hemisphere of the earth, Proserpine the lower: when the sun was in the six inferior signs, they said he was with Proserpine, and when in the six superior,

* Saturnal. lib. i.

with Venus. Regarding the boar as the symbol of winter, because he delights in marshy and frozen places, they figured this animal to have killed Adonis. Winter, therefore, which diminishes light and the sun's heat, is the wound of Adonis." This allegory, which under its mysterious veil described the phenomena of nature, was metamorphosed in passing from Phœnicia to Greece, whose elegant and harmonious poets celebrate the grief of Venus for her lover.

The Phœnicians sacrificed also to the elements and the winds, as might be expected from a maritime people; and their mariners placed small idols, called pateci, in the prows of their ships, which they considered as tutelary gods, and carried about for protection from the dangers of the ocean. The worship of their gods was intermixed with impure rites; and human sacrifices made a part of their religious ceremonies. But this barbarous practice, which was common to them with other nations, was discontinued in the enlightened periods of their history *.

Their temples were filled with priests, prophets, and other ministers of religion. Jezebel, a Phœnician princess, and queen to Ahab, king of Israel, entertained four hundred and fifty priests of Baal at her table. They were wont to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings to this god, and to dance with violent gesticulations around the altar. Having by this exercise, and violent straining of their voices, worked themselves to the height of phrenzy, they began to cut their bodies with knives and lancets, and to predict future events, as if possessed by some supernatural power. Astarte had also many priests, four hundred of whom were supported by Jezebel; and

* Bochar. Canaan, lib. i. Selden. de Diis Syr.

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in our version of scripture are called Prophets of the Groves. But the priests in Tyre and Sidon, however numerous, never attained to that dignity, importance, and power, which was possessed by the priests in Egypt, and the great empires of the East.

The character of the Phœnicians was that of a commercial and a free people. An active and enterprizing spirit, prompted by necessity, animated by the love of gain, and strengthened by success, raised them to the sovereignty of the seas, and made their country the centre of all the trade in the world. The first effects of opulence are, to increase the resources of industry; to add to the conveniences and enjoyments of life; and to diffuse happiness among those classes in society which are apparently the most wretched. But there are evils, which rapid or immoderate prosperity carries in its train, as certain and pernicious as those which attend indolence and poverty. Traffick introduces dishonesty and treachery; opulence engenders pride, luxury, and effeminacy; vanity and voluptuousness become ruling passions; and to these, Tyre and Sidon, like some commercial cities in modern Europe, owed their declension and their fall.

CHAP. X.

Of the Jews.

PALÆSTINE, or the Holy Land, was bounded on the west by the Mediterranean, and on the east by the river Jordan, the lake Asphaltites, and the sea of Tiberias. Towards the north, it was separated from Phœnicia by the mountain Anti-Libanus; and on the south, from Edom, or Idumæa, by another

169 , 170 pages missing in book

this the eye loses itself towards the plains of the Hauzan, and then stretching to the north, return by the mountains of Hosbeya and the Kasmia, to repose on the fertile plains of Galilee, without being able to reach the sea. But what hath chiefly contributed to render this mountain venerable, is the tradition of its having been the scene of our Saviour's transfiguration. On this hill are still to be seen the remains of a fortification built by Josephus the historian. On the east part are the ruins of a strong castle, within the cinctures of which are three altars, in memory of the three tabernacles which St. Peter in his ecstasy proposed to build.

The next mountain in dignity is Carmel, which stands on the skirts of the sea. It extends eastward, as far as the plain of Jezreel, and on the south reaches to Cæsarea. It seems to have obtained its name from its fertility; for Carmel, in Hebrew, signifies the vine of God, and is used in the prophetic writings to signify a fruitful spot. The same name was given to a city on the hill, and to a heathen deity worshipped there without either temple or statue.* This mountain is much celebrated, both by Jews and Christians, for having been the residence of Elijah, who, before he was translated to heaven, is supposed to have lived in a cave on its side, which is still shewn to the traveller. From the earliest ages the Christians began to shew a more than ordinary veneration for Carmel, particularly for Elijah's cave and garden, which are visited and reverenced, not only by Christians and Jews, but also by the Mahommedans. It has given the title to an order of monks in the Roman church, who are called Carmelites, some of whom reside in an antient monastery on the mountain.

Mount Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, stands about a mile distant from Jerusalem, and commands

* Tacit. Hist. lib. ii. p. 359.

the prospect of the whole city, from which it is parted by the brook Kedron, and the valley of Jehoshaphat. It is part of a long ridge of hills, extending from north to south, with three summits. From the central elevation our Saviour ascended up into heaven. On that spot where they pretend to shew the prints of his feet on the rock a small chapel is built, which is now converted into a mosque. Antiently a magnificent church was built in the same place by the empress Helena.

Calvary, or Golgotha, is another mountain near Jerusalem, held in the highest veneration as the place of our Saviour's crucifixion. It stood antiently without the walls of the city; but Constantine the Great inclosed the mountain within the walls, and erected a magnificent church over the place where the cross was fixed. It has continued a place of as great veneration among the Christians, as the Temple was among the Jews.

The Dead-sea, or Asphaltite Lake, is called in the Jewish writings the Sea of Sodom, the Sea of the Desert, and the SaltSea. The name of the Asphaltite Lake was given to it, on account of the great quantity of asphaltus, or bitumen, which was found on its borders. It was called the Dead-sea, because it was believed that no creature could live in it, on account of its excessive saltness. This lake was probably formed by the submersion of the vale of Siddim, where stood the five, or, according to Strabo, the thirteen cities, which, for their unnatural crimes, perished in an extraordinary conflagration. The hollow through which the Jordan flows, is a region of volcanos. The bituminous and sulphureous sources of the Lake Asphaltites, the lava, the pumice-stones thrown upon its banks, and the hot bath of Tabaria, demonstrate that this valley has been the seat of a subterraneous fire which is not yet extinguished. Clouds of smoke are often observed

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to issue from the lake, and new crevices to be formed upon its banks. The phenomena of the place confirm the relation of Josephus and Strabo, that the whole valley has been formed by the violent sinking of a country which formerly poured the Jordan into the Mediterranean. The catastrophe of the five cities destroyed by fire was probably occasioned by the eruptions of a volcano then burning. "According to the tradition of the inhabitants," says Strabo*, "the valley of the lake was formerly peopled by thirteen flourishing cities, which were swallowed up by a volcano." This account is confirmed by the ruins still discovered by travellers on the western border. These eruptions have long since ceased; but earthquakes, which usually succeed them, still continue to be felt at intervals in this country. History gives many examples of these convulsions of nature, which have changed the face of Antioch, Laodicea, Tripoli, Berytus, and Sidon. In the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-nine, a violent earthquake ravaged the country, and destroyed in the valley of Balbeck upwards of twenty thousand persons. For three months the shocks of it terrified the inhabitants of Lebanon so much, as to make them abandon their houses and dwell under tents.

This lake contains neither animal nor vegetable life. No verdure is seen on its banks, nor are fish to be found in its waters. But the report that its exhalations are so pestiferous as to destroy birds flying over it, is an exaggeration of antiquity. It is common to see swallows skimming its surface, and dipping for the water necessary to build their nests.

The real cause which deprives it of vegetables and animals, is the extreme saltness of the water, which is infinitely stronger than that of the sea.

* Lib. xvi. p. 764.

The soil around it, equally impregnated with this salt, refuses to produce plants; and the air itself, which becomes loaded with it, from evaporation, and which receives also the sulphureous and bituminous vapours, is unfavourable to vegetation: hence the deadly aspect which reigns around the lake. The origin of the mineral by which it is impregnated is easily discovered, for on the south-west shore are mines of fossil salt. They are situated in the side of the mountains which extend along that border, and from time immemorial have supplied the neighbouring Arabs, and even the city of Jerusalem.

All travellers and geographers remark, that though this lake receives the waters of the Jordan, of Jabok, of Kishon, and of many springs which flow into it from the adjacent mountains, yet it never overflows, though there is no visible way discovered by which it discharges that great influx. Some naturalists have suspected a subterraneous communication with the Mediterranean or the Red-sea; but besides that there are no phenomena to warrant this supposition, it has been demonstrated by accurate calculations, that evaporation is more than sufficient to carry off the waters introduced by the Jordan and other streams. The exhalations are in fact very considerable, and often become sensible to the eye, by the fogs with which the lake is covered at the rising of the sun, and which are afterwards dispersed by the heat.

The Sea of Tiberias was so called from a city of that name on the south-west shore. It was also called the Lake of Genezareth, and the Sea of Galilee, being almost surrounded with that province. The river Jordan runs through it, and, according to Josephus, it is a hundred furlongs in length, and about forty in breadth. Unlike the sea of Sodom, it

it is highly extolled for the sweetness, coolness, and excellency of its water, and for the abundance and variety of its fish, many of them of a different species from those with which we are acquainted. The lakes of Samachon, Jazan, and Phiala, are inconsiderable.

The rivers in this and the adjacent regions of Syria scarcely merit the name. If the falling rains and the dissolving snows give them some importance in the winter, their course is only to be discovered, during the remainder of the year, by the round stones and fragments of rocks with which their beds are filled. They are nothing but torrents and cascades; from the proximity of the mountains whence they rise to the sea, their waters have not time to collect in long valleys, so as to form rivers.

The only river of note in Palæstine is the Jordan. It derives its source from the lake Phiala, and, after having run several furlongs under ground, emerges from the earth at Paneas. Rising from its second source, it runs to the south-west, and sends its waters to the lakes of Samachon and Tiberias; after a course of near a hundred miles, it falls into the Dead-sea. Its breadth between the two principal lakes, in few places exceeds eighty feet; but its depth is about ten or twelve, and it is sixty paces wide at its mouth. In winter it overflows its channel, and, swelled by the periodical rains and the melting snows, forms a sheet of water sometimes a quarter of a league broad. The time of its overflowing is generally in March, when the snows dissolve on the mountains of the Shaik; at which time, more than any other, its waters are troubled, and its course rapid and impetuous. Its banks are covered with a thick forest of reeds, willows, and various shrubs, which serve as an asylum for wild

 boars,

boars, ounces, jackals, hares, and different kinds of birds.

The narrow limits of this country, intersected by ridges of mountains, abounding in woods, and marked with deserts, have induced many learned men to doubt or disbelieve its fertility and populousness in former times. It must be confessed that, from the appearance of the country since the destruction of Jerusalem and the extermination of the Jews, more particularly since, like the opulent countries in its neighbourhood, it has been rendered desolate by the oppression of the Turks, no idea can be formed of its antient flourishing condition. But upon the same principles we would reject the accounts of antient history concerning the prosperity and splendour of Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, the islands of Asia Minor, Greece, Carthage, and Syracuse. When the traveller, after wandering among barren and rocky mountains, discovers the ruins of Jerusalem, he beholds indeed a striking example of the vicissitude of human affairs. When he observes its walls levelled with the dust, its ditches filled up, and all its buildings deformed with ruins, he can scarcely believe that he contemplates the celebrated metropolis of a great nation, which formerly withstood the efforts of the most powerful empires, and for a time resisted the progress of the Roman arms. Still more will he be astonished at its antient splendour, when he considers its situation, amidst a rugged soil, destitute of water, and surrounded by dry channels of torrents, and steep precipices. Remote from every great road, and distant from the sea, it seems neither to have been calculated for a considerable mart of commerce, nor the centre of a great consumption. But the history of mankind affords abundant instances, that natural obstacles may be overcome, and that an enlightened legisla-

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ture, a vigorous policy, and national industry, when favoured by happy circumstances, can diffuse fertility among barren wilds, and crowd the desart with population. From the exile Marius sitting on the ruins of Carthage, no just conjecture could be drawn concerning the flourishing fortunes of the individual, or of the nation.

When we consider the nature of the country itself, we find no reason to call in question the accounts of antient historians, both sacred and profane. It is described by Moses *as a land that flowed with milk and honey; as a country of brooks and waters, and of fountains that spring out of the valleys and the hills; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs and pomegranates, of oil, olives, and honey; a land where there is no lack of any thing; whose rocks are iron, and out of whose mountains brass is dug up.*

Many circumstances contributed to the fecundity and abundance of Palæstine. The temperature of an atmosphere, which was not subject to excessive heats or colds; the regularity of the seasons, with the periodical fall of the former and the latter rain; the natural fertility of the soil, which required no manuring, and could be cultivated by a small plough and a single yoke of oxen; seconded by the industry of the inhabitants, each of whom was lord of his little possession, contributed to augment the riches of nature, and to multiply the enjoyments of man. Judea abounded in grain of the most excellent quality, and the wheat which grew in its territories was preferred to that of other countries. It was produced in such profusion, that, besides what sufficed the inhabitants under the reign of Solomon, twenty thousand measures of it, and as many of oil, were sent annually to Hiram king of Tyre. So late as the age of Herod Agrippa, the cities of

Tyre and Sidon were supplied by the luxuriant harvests of Palæstine.

The richness and variety of their fruits were no less remarkable. Judea was renowned for the palm-tree and its dates. The vines produced grapes of the most delicious flavour, twice, and sometimes thrice, in the year. The wines of Gaza, Ascalon, and Sarepta, as well as those of Bethlehem and Libanus, were famous among remote nations; the balm of Gilead, the produce of the balsam shrub, was esteemed a precious drug among the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and over all the East. The woods abounded with honey, which was deposited in the hollow of the trees, and in the clefts of the rocks. The sugar-cane was cultivated with success; and the cotton, flax, and hemp, used by the inhabitants, were chiefly of their own growth and manufacture. From their vicinity to Lebanon, cedars, cypresses, and other stately trees, were common in most parts of the country. Cattle abounded in the hilly countries, which not only afforded them abundance of pasture, but of water, which descended thence into the valleys, which it fertilized. The lake of Tiberias and the Mediterranean sea abounded in fish. The populousness of Palæstine corresponded to its fertility. When Joab, by order of David, numbered the people, there were of the Israelites eight hundred thousand fighting men, and of the single tribe of Judah five hundred thousand; and supposing these to be a third of the inhabitants, their number will amount to four millions.

The testimony of profane authors concurs with that of the sacred in asserting the fruitfulness of the Holy Land. The emperor Julian and the historian Tacitus were certainly not partial to the Jews; yet both of them celebrate the excellence and abundance of the fruits and productions by which Judea was distinguished.

distinguished. Modern travellers, who have surveyed it in its present state of desolation, have discovered visible signs of its natural riches and fertility, and attribute its present sterility to want of cultivation, arising from the oppression of the government, and the consequent indolence of the inhabitants. "The Holy Land," says Shaw, "were it as well peopled and cultivated as in former periods, would still be more fruitful than the best provinces of Syria or Phœnicia. The cotton that is gathered in the plains of Ramah, Esdraelon, and Zebulon, is in greater esteem than what is cultivated near Sidon and Tripoli. Neither is it possible for pulse, wheat, or any sort of grain, to be more excellent than what is sold at Jerusalem." Volney, the latest traveller to this country, gives his evidence to the natural richness of the soil. "What is said of its actual fertility," says he, "corresponds with the idea given of it in the Hebrew writings. Whenever wheat is sown, if it be not destroyed by rain, it repays the husbandmen with profusion, and grows to the height of a man. The pilgrims assert, also, that the inhabitants are stronger and taller than the inhabitants of Syria*."

The history of this singular people merits our attention in two very different and important views; in a civil and in a religious capacity; as an Eastern nation, and as the people of God. In the first of these characters we contemplate them in the same light as other nations who are the subjects of historical record; in the last we consider them as the favourites of Providence, and the depositaries of that revelation from heaven, which was one day to enlighten the most remote nations, and distant corners of the earth.

In an historical view, the life of Abraham, and

* Volney's Travels, vol. ii. let. 30.

his immediate descendants, presents us with the idea of the pastoral state of society, which we find among all nations in the commencement of their records. A people living in tents, and roaming from place to place, without a fixed abode, as fresher pastures or purer springs invited them; governed by an ancestor or patriarch, venerable for his age, and respectable for his wisdom; distinguished by the virtues of rude hospitality, undisciplined valour, and family-affection embittered by family feuds; signalized only by the simple adventures which originate from an intercourse with neighbouring tribes as unrefined as themselves; constitute the chief lines in the history of the Hebrew race, from the period of Abraham to their captivity in Egypt.

The merits of Joseph, the preserver of that kingdom, and the access which he had to the throne, secured at first a welcome reception to his kinsmen. But on the death of his protector, *a king arose who knew not Joseph.* Shepherds were held in abomination by the Egyptians; as the pastoral and predatory tribes of Arabia frequently invaded their territories, and had formerly made themselves masters of the kingdom. The extraordinary multiplication of this alien race, with their singular manners, seemed to endanger the safety of the state. By tyrannical edicts they were persecuted, oppressed, and condemned to the severe and ignominious labours of servitude. While the voice of their misery and their supplications for relief were sent up to Heaven, at last a deliverer of their own race arose. Moses, who was educated in the court of Pharaoh, and instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, rescued his kindred tribes from the yoke of oppression, and the house of bondage. Having delivered them from Egyptian tyranny, he conducted them into the deserts of Sinai, and kept them in these hos-

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tile regions for a whole generation, to initiate them in the art of war, and transform a multitude of shepherds into a nation of warriors. Eminent for legislative wisdom, as well as military talents, he compiled a code of laws, for the future conduct of the nation, which discover in a high degree the enlarged mind and extensive views of the lawgiver. Under Joshua, the successor of Moses, the descendants of Abraham took possession of the land of Canaan. The fertility of this country, and the opulence of its first inhabitants, owing to their commercial intercourse with foreign nations, I have already had occasion to describe. Palæstine was divided among the twelve tribes, and the Hebrew commonwealth possessed the spoils of the conquered nations.

After the death of Joshua, no particular person succeeded him in the government; every tribe was governed by its respective heads or elders, who commanded the troops in their wars with the neighbouring nations. A temporary government was sometimes administered, by individuals of extraordinary talents and virtues, under the name of Judges or Sophetim, a species of authority which was also established in Phœnicia and in Carthage. At last the people demanded a king, and Saul, recommended, according to the manners of barbarians, by his superior stature and the advantages of his person, was raised to the sovereign dignity. Rejected soon on account of his imbecility and misconduct, a new royal family was appointed, and the kingdom was established in the house of David. Henceforth the Hebrew people, formerly obscure or depressed, assume a more august form and acquire a name among the nations.

Elevated from an humble situation to the throne by his martial achievements and political sagacity, the hero of Israel raised his country to renown, gave

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it consequence and consideration among the neighbouring states, and caused its name to be revered over all the East. After securing his new-acquired authority by a series of victories, and extending his conquests over the adjacent nations, he invaded the kingdom of Edom or Idumæa, and reduced it to be a province of his empire. By this conquest he became master of two sea-port towns on the Red-sea, Elath and Ezion-Geber, which, in the pacific and splendid reign of his son Solomon, became a source of extraordinary opulence and new importance to the kingdom of Israel.

The success of the Phœnicians in the trade which they carried on by the Red-sea with Arabia and India on the one hand, and with the eastern coast of Africa on the other, attracted the attention and imitation of Solomon. Succeeding to a kingdom rendered illustrious by the battles and victories of his father, this wise prince applied to the arts of peace, and endeavoured to make his subjects flourish by industry, as they had done formerly by war. He entered into an alliance with Hiram, king of Tyre, and employed the ingenuity and industry of the Phœnicians in carrying on a commerce with which they were so well acquainted. He went in person to Elath and Ezion-Geber, inspected the building of the ships destined to this trade, fortified these harbours, and made every necessary preparation for conducting commercial voyages to the Indies of the antient world. He peopled these maritime cities with inhabitants brought from the sea-coasts of Palæstine, particularly the Tyrians, with whom his generous ally, Hiram, supplied him in great numbers *. His fleets, thus fitted out, sailed from the Red-sea, under the direction of Phœnician pilots, to those ports in Arabia and Africa which

* 1 Kings ix. 28. 2 Chron. viii. 18.

they had been accustomed to frequent. By one voyage to Ophir, he obtained four hundred and fifty talents of gold*. By his enlightened and well-regulated efforts, he drew to these ports on the Red-sea, and thence to Jerusalen, the produce and luxuries of Africa, Arabia, Persia, and India, and acquired such immense opulence, that he is said to have made silver abound in Zion like the stones of the street.

From the elevation and splendour to which the kingdom of Israel was now raised, we find Solomon contracting a matrimonial alliance with the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and his court assuming the pomp and luxury of an oriental empire.

After the division of the kingdom, in the weak and unfortunate reign of Rehoboam, Idumæa remained to the house of David, and the Jews continued to carry on this trade from the port of Ezion-Geber. On the accession of Jehoram to the throne, the Edomites revolted, and having expelled his viceroy, chose a king of their own, and under his conduct recovered their antient liberty. From this time the Jewish traffick by the Arabian gulph was interrupted till the reign of Uzziah. He, having recovered Elath to Judah, fortified it anew, and expelling the Edomites, planted it with his own people. The antient traffick being thus renewed, was carried on and continued till Ahaz began his reign. At that period Rezin, king of Damascus, seized Elath from the Jews, and planted it with Syrians, in order to partake the profit of that trade of the southern seas, which the kings of Judah had hitherto reaped by holding possession of that port. But Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, having conquered Rezin, and subdued the kingdom of Damas-

* 2 Chron. viii. 18. Equal to three millions two hundred and forty thousand pounds sterling.

cus, seized Elath as belonging to his new conquest, and retaining it in his possession, transferred to his Tyrian subjects the benefits of that trade which the Jews had carried on with little interruption since the days of Solomon. The sources of its prosperity being cut off, the kingdom of Judah gradually declined, till Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and the inhabitants carried captive to Babylon.

When we consider the Jews in a religious light, a higher order of things opens to our contemplation. In the multitude of historical records which heathen antiquity has transmitted to modern times, we behold human policy and ambition directing the affairs of men, and operating revolutions in the world; but that Almighty arm, by which all the movements in the universe are begun and conducted, is totally concealed. The sacred volume reveals to us the secret designs of Providence, and removes the veil which covers the counsels of the Almighty. The revelation, darkly intimated to the parents of mankind after their apostacy, that a divine person was to descend from their race to repair the ruins of their fall, and restore man to his original dignity, though obliterated in succeeding ages, was one day to be promulgated to the world. But it is one of the laws by which all the operations of Providence are conducted in this system, that perfection of every kind is gradual and not sudden. There is a rise and progress in all the works of Nature. The vegetable springs from a tender shoot, and the animal from an infant state. Man, in his collective as well as his individual capacity, advances to improvement by degrees. Civilization and refinement; the inventions of art, and the discoveries of science; legislative wisdom and the perfection of political institutions; are not sudden acquisitions, but the gradual growth of time and experience, the slow production of enquiry and investigation for many ages.

This law, which is established in the natural and in the moral, prevails also in the religious world. The light of revelation was not poured upon the nations all at once, and with its full splendour. The obscurity of the dawn went before the brightness of the noon-day. Great designs are seldom executed without due preparation. There was a propriety of announcing beforehand the appearance of a Messenger from heaven, the birth of a Prince upon whose shoulders the government of the world was to rest. With this view, God selected the descendants of Abraham as a peculiar people, and instituted the Mosaic œconomy. At that period the nations of the earth had corrupted the purity of natural religion, and forgotten or perverted the traditions of revelation. Following their vain imaginations or vicious passions, they sunk into idolatry of the most abject and deplorable kind. A depraved worship, impure rites, and bloody ceremonies, prevailed among them. Their religion was impiety. Altars were erected to the elements, to the stars, to mortal men, to every thing except the true God. The world seemed to be torn from the hands of its Creator, and brought under the dominion of evil spirits and powers malignant to man. When human affairs were in this condition, God mercifully interposed, resumed in an extraordinary manner the reins of the universe, and revealed himself to a world which seemed to have forgotten his existence. He laid hold of one people with a saving hand; snatched them from the defilement and corruption of the neighbouring nations; instructed them in the principles of pure religion, and gave them a code of laws to regulate their conduct.

It was not his intention to bring them from the gross darkness in which they formerly wandered, immediately into the perfect day; to raise them

from

from the bottom of the vale at once to the summit of the mountain; but to advance their progress by slow degrees, agreeable to the frailty of human nature, and the designs of Divine Providence. A dawn of light was sufficient for the morning of the world; the infant state of society was not ripe for a more perfect instruction; and that nation, to whose capacity these laws were adapted, was unfit to receive the purest and sublimest lessons of wisdom.

The revelation which God made of himself to his chosen people was accommodated to their situation, and to the state of the world at that time. As idolatry prevailed universally among the neighbouring nations, the worship of one Supreme Being, the creator and governor of the world, infinite in wisdom, power, and goodness, the avenger of guilt, but the patron and protector of righteousness, was established by Divine authority among the people of Israel. To counteract the natural propensity of mankind which leads them to superstition, and prevent the contagion of heathen worship which substituted external ceremonies and ritual observances in the place of piety and virtue, the means of acceptance with Heaven were declared to consist in purity of heart and integrity of life. The worthy and acceptable worshipper in the temple of the Most High, was not to come before him "with thousands of rams, or ten thousand rivers of oil, but to offer the sacrifices of righteousness, to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." Doctrines, which among other nations were regarded as discoveries of the most sublime philosophy, were revealed at once to these rude tribes; and the profound though simple truths of theology, which among the most enlightened and refined states of antiquity were confined to the few, and only imparted to those who were initiated in the mysteries, were promulgated to mankind.

mankind. When ignorance and idolatry prevailed among the nations, it was requisite that one people should be the depositaries of a religion so worthy of the Deity; and while the shades of superstition covered the rest of the earth, a morning rose in Palæstine, which in its progress was to enlighten the world.

The divine mission of Moses to the people of Israel was confirmed by the miracles which he performed, and the prophecies which he uttered; and on these the public evidence of a revelation from Heaven must ever be established. It is from the wisdom, beneficence, and power displayed in the works of nature, that the existence and perfections of the Supreme Being are inferred. The heavens declare the glory of their Creator, and the firmament sheweth forth his handy-work. The revolutions of the seasons, the vicissitude of day and night, and the perpetual conservation of the world, announce the presence and the operation of that Power by whom the order of nature was at first established. On these mighty works natural religion is founded, and on operations of a similar kind revealed religion rests. Miracles have been improperly defined "violations of the laws of nature," as if one allmighty power was counteracting the operations of another. They ought to be considered as works similar or equivalent to those of nature, performed in proof of a mission from Heaven. To plant the organs of vision, and to give life, are operations of nature: to restore sight to the blind, and to raise the dead, are miracles. Both suppose a Power which is divine; and nature, whether observing her stated course, or receding from her established laws, acknowledges the same Author.

The mighty works which Moses performed in proof of his divine mission, were obvious to sense, and cognizable by reason. He did not attempt to impose

impose on the credulity of the Israelites, by pretending to an intercourse with celestial powers in unfrequented recesses and solitary caverns. He submitted his credentials to the decision of the senses, and made the Jews witnesses of the Divine interposition in their behalf. The *miracles performed in Egypt*, and *the wonders displayed in the field of Zoan*, were wrought for their own deliverance, or the punishment of their enemies. The sea, divided by divine power to permit them to pass in safety between its suspended billows; the heavenly bread which supported them in a barren desert; the waters gushing from the rocks at the stroke of a rod, and following them in their course; the heavens giving them a visible signal to direct their march by a pillar of cloud during the day, and a pillar of fire by night; the descent of the Almighty on Mount Sinai, and his voice speaking to them in the midst of the cloud, were miraculous appearances and interpositions that appealed to the evidence of sense, and were confirmed by the test of observation.

Prophecies, that announce and describe future events as if they were present, are only miracles of a different kind. The omnipotence of the Deity is displayed in the one; his omniscience is proved by the other. To draw aside the veil from futurity; to record the history of the ages to come; to predict the glory of kings before they were brought into existence; and the fall of empires ere they had attained to their meridian splendour, belongs only to Him who beholds the future as the present, and to those to whom he reveals the hidden mysteries of heaven. In the patriarchal ages, such mysterious oracles were given to console the distresses and support the faith of the pious. But under the Mosaic œconomy, the ministry of the prophets forms a remarkable part in the history of the chosen people.

They

They were set apart from the rest of the nation by a retired life, austere manners, and a peculiar garb. They lived in a sort of community under the direction of a superior, and practised the virtues of self-denial and mortification. Apart from the world, they held converse with Heaven, and were favoured with visions of futurity. Their chief predictions related to the Messiah, his incarnation, sufferings, death, and the glory that was to follow. This, however, belongs to sacred rather than to civil history. It was chiefly in times of idolatry and corruption that these extraordinary messengers of the Most High exercised their prophetical functions. Then *they lifted up their voice like a trumpet*, warned the Israelites of their wickedness, summoned their attention to the law of Moses and the covenant of their fathers, and, by denunciations of future calamities to themselves and the people around, exhorted them to repentance.

Hence foreign nations, as well as their own, were the subjects of their prophecy. They beheld from afar the revolutions that were to take place in the cities and empires around them, and described the history of unborn ages as if they had been spectators of the events which they foretold. Those nations in particular, whose transactions I have now recorded, are distinguished in the sacred oracles; their various fortunes, whether flourishing or adverse; their splendour and their fall, are minutely and accurately described by the prophetic pen. This forms a shining and a striking part in the history of the Hebrews; and as it furnishes a proof of the inspiration of the sacred volumes, which speaks to all nations and to all ages, the detail will be no less interesting to piety than gratifying to curiosity.

The kingdom of Assyria was the first of the great empires that flourished in the East. A succession

sion of warlike princes had established the greatness of Nineveh on the ruins of the independent states in the neighbourhood; and the greater part of Asia submitted to the Assyrian yoke. The extraordinary power and sudden prosperity of the kingdom had corrupted the morals of the rulers and the people; rapacity, cruelty, and oppression, marked the progress of their conquests; they had carried the ten tribes of Israel into captivity, and imposed a tribute on the kingdom of Judah. The vengeance of Heaven was denounced against them for their wickedness by the prophet Jonah; but on their humbling themselves before the true God, and repenting in sackcloth and ashes, their doom was delayed. But Nineveh did not continue long to bring forth the fruits of repentance; the inhabitants returned to their former courses, and added to the catalogue of their crimes. Nahum the prophet, therefore, who lived in the reign of Hezekiah, and about ninety years later than Jonah, foretold the destruction of this proud city, which accordingly took place about sixty years thereafter, when the Medes and Babylonians, under Cyaxares and Nabopolassar, besieged Nineveh, and overturned the Assyrian empire. The predictions of this inspired prophet relate entirely to the destruction of the city and its inhabitants. After a sublime exordium, in which he describes the justice and power of the Deity, he introduces Jehovah himself proclaiming freedom to his people from the Assyrian yoke, and announcing the ruin of the mighty city that had shed the blood of his servants; marching at the head of the armies that should come to besiege it; striking terror and consternation before them; and delivering the city, with its inhabitants and its treasures, into the merciless hands of rapacious and insatiable plunderers. He next describes the instruments of Jehovah's vengeance, the military array, the

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flourishing. The walls were a hundred feet high, so broad that three chariots could drive abreast on them, and were defended with fifteen hundred towers, two hundred feet in height. Yet, in the meridian of her prosperity, the prophet foresaw her fall, and foretold, "that the Lord would destroy Assur;" depopulate the flourishing city, and turn the fruitful field into a desert where no man cometh. The moment was marked when every remains of its antient greatness should be razed, and its place should not be known. Lucian, a native of the country, who flourished in the second century, affirms, that no traces of Nineveh remained in his time; and now its very situation is unknown. Such has been the consummation of the Divine vengeance, and the truth of the Divine predictions!

The Chaldean greatness succeeded to the Assyrian, and the seat of Oriental empire was transferred from Nineveh to Babylon. Enriched with the spoils of the East, and exulting in the day of her prosperity, the proud metropolis of Asia seemed born to command the world. She said in her heart, according to the language of the prophet,* "I am the queen of nations, and my reign is forever. I am; and there is none else besides me. I am exempted from that vicissitude and decline which are incident to other nations. My destiny shall survive coeval with those stars in which the observers of the heavens have read the records of my perpetual duration." But her pride and luxury, her cruelty to the Jews during their captivity at Babylon, and the sacrilegious impiety of her monarch, wrought her downfall. She had been the instrument of the Divine vengeance to punish guilty kingdoms, and the time was approaching when "the Lord was to break the staff wherewith

* Isaiah xlvii. 7, 8, &c.

he had smote so many nations," and destroy the weapon of war which had been drunk with the blood of the people. More than a hundred years before the accomplishment of this prediction, Isaiah foretold the doom that was pronounced against Babylon, named the prince who was to fulfil this prophecy, before he was born, describing the minutest circumstances relating to the siege and the taking of the city, and painted the perpetual desolation of this once flourishing capital in every succeeding age.

The prophecy begins with the command of God to assemble the forces who were destined to execute the purposes of his vengeance. * "Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt the voice unto them, shake the hand that they may go into the gates of the nobles. I have commanded my chosen ones. I have also set apart my mighty ones to execute my wrath. The noise of a multitude in the mountains like as of a great people! a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together! The Lord of Hosts mustered the host of the battle. They come from a far country, from the end of heaven, even the Lord and the weapons of his indignation, to destroy the land of Chaldea. Howl ye, for the day of the Lord is at hand; it shall come as a destruction from the Almighty. Therefore shall hands be faint, and every man's heart shall melt; pangs and sorrows shall take hold of them; they shall be in pain as a woman that travaileth. Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel with wrath and fierce anger. For the stars of heaven and the constellations thereof shall not give their light: the sun shall be darkened in his going forth, and the moon shall not cause her light to shine. And I will punish the world for their wickedness: I will cause

* Isaiah xiii. 1, &c.

the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible. Every one that is found, shall be thrust through; and every one that is joined to them, shall fall by the sword. Their children shall be dashed to pieces before their eyes; their houses shall be spoiled, and their wives ravished. Behold, I will stir up the Medes against them, which shall not regard silver, and as for gold they shall not delight in it. Their bows also shall dash the young men to pieces; and they shall have no pity on the fruit of the womb, their eye shall not spare children."

The predictions of the prophets became clearer as they approached the event that was foretold. Isaiah at last mentions Cyrus by name, the Persian prince who was chosen to be the instrument of Divine Providence, in executing his purposes both of vengeance and of mercy, and marks down the circumstances and the manner in which Babylon was to be taken.

"Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings; to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the portals shall not be shut: I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will say to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up the rivers; I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron; and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I the Lord, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the Lord, and there is no God besides me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: that they may

know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that I am the Lord, and that there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things *."

The history of the taking of Babylon, which I have already given †, is the best commentary on this prediction. On the approach of an annual festival, at which the Babylonians were accustomed to spend the whole night in rioting and drunkenness, Cyrus contrived a stratagem to take possession of the city. He diverted the course of the Euphrates into the great lake dug to receive its superfluous waters during the inundation; he then stationed one division of his army at the place where the river ran into Babylon, and another where it came out, ordering them to enter the city by its empty channel. The army having got within the walls by the bed of the Euphrates, might have been taken there as in a net, if the brazen gates which led from the streets to the river had not been providentially left open to give them admittance into the city, now devoted to destruction. They entered, and a tumult having arisen, the gates of the palace were opened by the king's orders, to enquire into the cause. The Persians then rushed in, Belshazzar was slain, and the doom of Babylon accomplished. The prodigious wealth which Cyrus obtained by the plunder of the city, called by the prophet "the treasures of darkness, and the hidden riches of secret places," is also mentioned by the Greek historians. So clearly were the most minute and contingent circumstances foreseen and foretold by the inspired prophet!

* Isaiah xlv. 1, 2, &c.—The last verse alludes to the doctrine of the Two Principles, which prevailed in Persia.

† P. 87.

Many

Many other particulars attending this extraordinary event are described by Jeremiah. "Make bright the arrows, gather the shields; the Lord hath raised up the kings of the Medes; for his device is against Babylon to destroy it, because it is the vengeance of the Lord, the vengeance of his temple. O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy rapacity. The Lord of Hosts hath sworn by himself, Surely I will fill thee with men as with clouds of destroying caterpillars; and they shall lift up a shout against thee. Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the people; prepare the nations against her; call together the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; prepare against her the nations, with the king of the Medes, the captains, the rulers, and all the people of his dominion. The land shall tremble and mourn; for every purpose of the Lord shall be performed against Babylon, to make her a desolation without an inhabitant. I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry. I have laid a snare for thee; and thou art also taken, O Babylon, when thou wast not aware. The mighty men have forborne to fight; their strength has failed, they became as women; her dwelling-places are burned, and her bars broken. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to tell the king of Babylon that his city is taken. I will make drunk her princes, her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the King whose name is the Lord of Hosts. The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire.—How is Sheshach taken! How is the praise of the whole earth surprized! How is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations!"

The destruction of that proud and triumphant capital, which had so long oppressed the earth, and shed the blood of its inhabitants, is painted in various lights by the sacred writers. Isaiah has composed an ode on the occasion, which for elegance of disposition, sublimity of sentiment, boldness of colouring, beauty and force of expression, stands unrivalled among all the monuments of genius which antiquity has transmitted to modern times. A chorus of Jews is first introduced, expressing their astonishment at the sudden downfall of Babylon, and their exultation at the unexpected revolution in their affairs by the destruction of their tyrants.

"How hath the oppressor ceased! the golden city ceased! Jehovah hath broken the rod of the wicked, aud the sceptre of the rulers. He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in vengeance, is persecuted, and none hindereth."

The oppressed kingdoms and their rulers, denoted in the prophetic style by "the fir-trees and cedars of Lebanon," are next represented as shouting with joy, and the earth with its inhabitants triumphing over the fall of the tyrant.

"The whole earth is at rest, is quiet, they break forth into a joyful shout: even the fir-trees rejoice over thee, the cedars of Lebanon: since thou art fallen, no feller is come up against us."

The scene is then changed, and a new set of personages introduced. The regions of the dead are laid open, and Hades represented as rousing up the shades of the departed monarchs. They rise from their thrones to meet the king of Babylon, and insult him on his being reduced to the same humble and calamitous condition with themselves. This is the boldest figure that has ever been attempted in poetical composition, and is executed with astonishing

conciseness

conciseness and sublimity. Conceive the idea of an immense subterraneous vault, a vast gloomy cavern, all around the sides of which there are cells, in the manner of the Jewish sepulchres, to receive the dead bodies: here the deceased monarchs lie in distinguished state, suitable to their former rank, each on his own couch, with his arms beside him, and his chiefs around him. These illustrious shades rise at once from their couches, and advance from the entrance of the cavern to meet the king of Babylon, and to deride him on his fall.

"Hades from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming; it rouseth up the departed shades, the mighty of the earth; it raiseth from their thrones all the kings of the nations; they triumph over thee, Art thou, even thou too become weak as we? Art thou made like unto us? Is thy pride brought down to the grave, the sound of thy sprightly instruments? Is the vermin become thy couch, and the earthworm thy covering?"

The Jewish people are again brought forward uttering an exclamation in the form of a funeral dirge over the fallen tyrant.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut off from the earth, thou who didst subdue the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will be like the Most High. Yet thou art brought down to the mansions of the dead, and to the sides of the pit."

Strangers are next introduced, who discover the corpse of the king of Babylon, cast out and disfigured among the common slain. They bitterly reproach him for his desolating ambition, which brought him to such an ignominious end, and denounce vengeance on his race and posterity.

"Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that shook the kingdoms? that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities? All the kings of the nations lie in glory, every one in his own house: but thou art cast out of thy grave like an abominable branch; as a carcase trodden under foot. Thou shalt not be joined with them in burial, because thou hast destroyed the land, and slain the people. Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers, that they do not rise nor possess the land, nor fill the face of the world with cities."

At last God himself is introduced, denouncing the doom of Babylon, the extirpation of the royal family, the utter destruction of the city, its total desolation from age to age; and confirming the irreversible decree by the awful solemnity of an oath.

"I will rise up against them, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will cut off from Babylon the name and remnant, the son and the nephew. It shall become a heap of ruins, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing, without an inhabitant*. And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah. It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch his tent there, nor the shepherds make their folds there. But the wild beasts of the desert shall lurk in its ruins; the houses shall be full of doleful creatures: there shall the owls dwell and the satyrs dance. And the wild beasts of the island shall cry in their desolate domes, and dragons in their pleasant palaces. I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water: and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of Hosts. Je-

* Isaiah xiv. 4—25.

hovah

hovah hath sworn, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand *."

At the precise period appointed, this prediction was fulfilled. This great city, *the glory of kingdoms*, whose beauty, strength, and magnificence, made it the wonder of the world, has shared the ruin of Sodom and Gomorrah. Not a trace of its splendour, or even a vestige of its existence, is now to be found. Its palaces, towers, and temples, are mouldered into dust, and sunk into a morass. So completely is the prediction of the prophet verified, and the place where it stood so infested with wild beasts and serpents, that travellers inform us, they dare not come nearer to it than half a league: and thus it must ever remain, for it is doomed by the Divine decree *never to be inhabited from generation to generation.*

Next to Babylon, Tyre was one of the most antient and flourishing cities in the world. It had long possessed the dominion of the seas, and was the emporium of the eastern trade by the Arabian gulph, as well as of the western by the Mediterranean. The productions and manufactures of the various regions of the earth, whatever contributed to utility, or administered to luxury, were brought to its markets; and this varied abundance was dispersed by the Tyrian merchants over all the nations around them. A long and uninterrupted series of prosperity had corrupted the morals and swelled the pride of Tyre. Vanity, luxury, and voluptuousness, infected her citizens, while ambition and cruelty no less distinguished her rulers. She delighted to consider herself as the queen of cities, whose merchants ranked with the princes and kings of the earth, and who beheld every

* Isaiah xiii. 19. xiv. 23, 24.

maritime state as dependent on her power, or allied to her greatness. She had now added to her former iniquities, impiety against the God of Israel, and cruelty towards his people. She had rejoiced with insults over the ruins of Jerusalem, had sold the Jewish captives as slaves to the Gentiles, and carried away the consecrated vessels of the sanctuary to adorn the temples of her false gods.

This profanation and oppression drew down the vengeance of Heaven upon Tyre. The prophet Ezekiel, who denounces its destruction, introduces the king of Babylon assembling his army, raising the mounds, setting the engines, and shaking the walls.

"Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, with chariots and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall slay with the sword thy daughters in the field; and he shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount, and lift up the buckler against thee. He shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers. Thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the wheels, and of the chariots, when he shall enter into thy gates. With the hoofs of his horses shall he tread down all thy streets; he shall slay thy people with the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall be brought down to the ground. They shall make a spoil of thy riches, and a prey of thy merchandise; they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy palaces; and they shall lay thy stones, thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the waters. And I will cause the voice of thy songs to cease, and the sound of thy harps shall be heard no more. And I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon; thou shalt be built no more, for I have spoken it, saith the Lord."

The

The scene is then varied by the prophet. The isles and adjacent regions shake as with a mighty earthquake, from the concussion occasioned by the fall of Tyre. The groans of the dying reach the ears of the people inhabiting those regions. Their princes tremble for Tyre and for themselves.

"Shall not the isles shake at the sound of thy fall, when the wounded cry, when the slaughter is made in thy streets? then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones, lay aside their robes, and put off their embroidered garments: they shall clothe themselves with trembling, they shall sit upon the ground, and be astonished at thee. They shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say, How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring-men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea; she and her inhabitants, which caused her terror to be on all that haunt her ports? Now shall the isles tremble in the day of thy fall; yea, the isles of the sea shall be troubled at thy departure. For thus saith the Lord, When I shall make thee a desolate city, when I shall bring up the deep upon thee, and great waters shall cover thee; when I shall bring thee down with them that descend into the pit, and shall set thee in the lower parts of the earth, in places desolate of old; I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more: though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found, saith the Lord God."

Such is the prediction concerning Tyre, and verified both in the city on the Continent, and that on the Island. Tyre on the Continent was reduced to ruins by Nebuchadnezzar; the city on the Island was destroyed by Alexander the Great. The latter used all the stones, rubbish, and earth of the old city, in making a causeway, to connect the island

with the shore, by which means he obtained possession of the city, and fulfilled that part of the prophecy which says, That her very dust should be collected, and her stones, her timber, and her earth, laid in the midst of the waters. At present, and for ages past, this celebrated city is literally what the prophet foretold, "A bare rock, and a place to spread nets on." A late traveller, who visited the ruins of Tyre, thus expresses himself*: "It is a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, and vaults, without so much as one entire house. Its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches, harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly by fishing, who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his denunciation concerning Tyre, that it should be *as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry nets on.*"

"The vicissitudes of time," says the latest visitant of these regions †, "and the barbarism of the Greeks and the Mahometans, have accomplished the prediction relating to the fall of Tyre. Instead of that antient commerce, so active and so extensive, Tyre, reduced to a miserable village, has no other trade than the exportation of a few sacks of corn and raw cotton, nor any merchant but a single Greek factor, in the service of the French of Saide, who scarcely makes sufficient profit to maintain his family."

The predictions in the inspired writings concerning the invasion and conquest of Egypt, and the subsequent character of its inhabitants, is no less remarkable than striking. This celebrated kingdom was distinguished among the nations by its antiquity, splendour, military glory, and renown in the arts and sciences. By tracing back their origin through

* Maundrell. † M. Volney, vol. ii. p. 225.

a long

a long series of remote ages, *the sons of antient kings* seem to have acquired a kind of eternity in empire, and promised to themselves a similar duration in subsequent ages. The extravagant pride and impiety of Pharaoh-Hophra, who affected divine honours, and confided so much in the strength of his kingdom, that according to an antient historian *, he boasted "that the gods could not dispossess him," brought upon him the vengeance of Heaven, of which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon was the instrument. The prophet with great dignity addresses him under the image of one of those crocodiles which inhabited that river of whose riches and revenue he vaunted; and denounces the Divine judgments against him and his nation, subjecting them to the Babylonian yoke till that empire should fall.

"Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I am against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midst of his rivers, who has said, The river is mine, and I have made it. Behold, I will bring a sword upon thee, and cut off man and beast out of the land: and I will make Egypt waste and desolate, from the tower of Syene even to the border of Ethiopia. Egypt shall become the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, and they shall no more rule over the people. Thus saith the Lord, I will make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon. He and his people, the terrible of the nations, shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain. I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.

* Herodotus, lib. ii.

I will

I will break the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and lo, it shall not be bound up to be healed, to make it strong to hold the sword. And I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and disperse them through the countries*."

The prophet next describes to Pharaoh the fall of the king of Nineveh, under the image of a fair cedar of Lebanon, once flourishing and majestic, but now cut down and withered, with its broken branches strewed around. He then holds up to the king of Egypt the picture of his own fate, and informs him that the catastrophe of the Egyptian monarchs should be like that of the Assyrian.

"Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and a shadowing shroud. The waters made him great, the deep set him up on high, with her rivers running around his plants. His height was exalted above all the trees of the field, and his branches were multiplied because of the abundance of waters. All the fowls of heaven made their nests in his boughs, and beneath his branches did all the beasts of the field bring forth their young, and under his shadow dwelt all great nations. The cedars in Eden envied his height, and no tree in the garden of God was equal to him in beauty. But I delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; and strangers, the terrible of the nations, have cut him off: upon the mountains, and in all the valleys, are his branches fallen; his boughs are broken by all the rivers of the land; and all the people have gone down from his shadow, and have left him. I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to Hades with them that descend into the pit. To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of

* Ezek. xxix. 3. 10. 14. xxx. 13, 21.

Eden?

Eden? yet thou shalt be brought down to the nether parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised, with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord *."

As the kingdom of Egypt had made such a distinguished figure in the antient world, the destruction of it is afterwards predicted in another form; the severity of its fate is described by eclipses of the heavenly bodies, a figure in the prophetic writings to denote revolutions in empires and the fall of kings. The prophet then, by the Divine direction, orders a place in the lower regions of the earth for the king of Egypt and his host; and bids those who buried the slain drag him and his multitudes to the subterraneous mansions. At the tumult and commotion which this mighty work occasions, the infernal shades are represented as roused from their couches to enquire the cause. They see and hail the king of Egypt, and again lie down to their slumbers. Pharaoh being now introduced into this subterraneous cavern, the prophet leads him all around the sides of the pit; shews him the gloomy mansions of former tyrants; tells their names as he goes along; shews to what all their terror and pomp is come; and concludes with pointing out to Pharaoh the place destined for his lasting habitation.

"When I shall extinguish thy lustre, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will hide the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright luminaries of heaven will I obscure over thee, and set darkness upon thy land. Many people shall be amazed at thee, and their kings shall tremble. Son of man, cast down Egypt and her multitudes to the nether parts of the

* Ezek. xxxi. 3—18.

earth.

earth. The mighty of past times shall speak to the kings of Egypt out of the midst of Hades. Assur* is there, and all her company; their graves are around, all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which causeth terror in the land of the living. There is Elam†, and all her multitude, round about her grave, which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth. There is Meshech, Tubal‡, and all her multitude; they have laid their swords under their heads, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. There are the princes of the North and the Sidonians, who bear their shame with them that go down to the pit. Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted over all his armies that perished in battle. Terror shall seize the land of the living; and he shall be laid in the midst of the uncircumcised, with them that are slain by the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord God‖."

Some circumstances in this prophecy are so singular and striking, and have been so remarkably verified in the subsequent period of Egyptian history, that it is impossible not to recognize the Divine wisdom by which they were foretold. It is denounced by the prophet, "*that the arm of Pharaoh should be broke, and no more hold the sword; that there should be no more a prince of the land of Egypt; and that Egypt should not exalt itself any more above the nations, but become the basest of the kingdoms.*"

At the time when this prediction was uttered, Egypt was flourishing in arts and arms. Opulent at home and mighty abroad, the kingdom enjoyed the height of prosperity, carried on an extensive commerce, and cultivated the arts and sciences. Works

* Assyria. † Persia. ‡ The Scythians.

‖ Ezekiel xxxii. 7, 8. 16. 22. &c.

of

of industry and of genius; splendid cities, lakes resembling seas, pyramids, temples, and stately monuments, announced present prosperity, and seemed to promise future dominion. But the time was marked in the Divine decrees, when "*Egypt was to become the basest of kingdoms;*" the sceptre of the Pharaohs soon perished in their hands. For these two thousand years past, Egypt has been a tributary kingdom, without a prince of its own, subjected to a foreign yoke, and often governed by slaves. It has submitted to every revolution in empire, and acknowledged the yoke of every conquering nation. After having been invaded by the Chaldeans, it was subdued by the Persians under Cyrus. Alexander the Great added it to his conquests, and the Romans annexed it to their dominions. After forming a province in the empire of Constantinople, it became subject to the caliphs in the reign of Omar. It was wrested from the Saracens by the Mamlouks, or slave-usurpers; and in the fifteenth century was annexed to the Ottoman empire, of which it still forms a province. It is now governed by a Turkish pacha, whose authority is little more than nominal, and twenty-four begs or chiefs, who have usurped the wealth and the power of the country. During the five hundred and fifty years in which these Mamlouk chiefs have decided the fate of Egypt, not one of them has left subsisting issue; there does not exist a single family of them in the second generation; all their children perish in the first or second descent; and the race is continued by annual supplies of slaves from Georgia, Mingrelia, and the countries in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus.* The Egyptians have been so long habituated to the yoke of servitude, that they are possessed with a superstitious belief that it is the decree of Fate, that

* Volney's Travels, vol. i. p. 107.

foreign

foreign slaves must ever rule in Egypt, and the natives be subject. In such an extraordinary manner has the prediction revealed by HIM who alone foresees futurity, been verified, "*That Egypt should become the basest of kingdoms, and not have a prince of her own to sit upon the throne!*"

What the prophets have foretold concerning the Jewish nation itself, is no less astonishing and marvellous. While they denounced the vengeance of Heaven and final destruction to all the neighbouring kingdoms that had conquered or oppressed Judea, they announce the perpetual preservation of the chosen people, and point out the hand of Divine Providence extended in every age, to shield and defend them amidst the wrecks of empire and the fall of nations.

"Fear not, O Jacob, my servant, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, O Israel; for I will make a FULL END of ALL THE NATIONS whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a FULL END OF THEE, but correct thee *in measure*."

Since the promulgation of this prophecy, the volume of universal history records its accomplishment. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Chaldeans, the Macedonians, the Romans, who successively oppressed, subdued, or enslaved the Jews, have long since closed their career of greatness, and have no more a name among the nations. These mighty empires, which rose on the ruins of one another, have vanished from the earth, like the scenes of theatrical pomp, or the visions of a morning dream. The descendants of the individuals which compose them, are lost and blended among the common mass of mankind. But the Jews, though they have been dispersed among all nations, have never been confounded with any. Notwithstanding the destruction of Jerusalem, and their extermination from Judea, they still preserve their anitent character,

ter, their national peculiarities, and are a distinct race among men. They have remained unmixed with all the people among whom they have been scattered; they can trace their pedigree to the remotest antiquity, and their descent from the blood of the patriarchs. In their present calamitous and dispersed situation, they are witnesses to all the world of the truth and divinity of that religion which was revealed to their fathers.

No subject can be more striking to a philosophical or a pious mind, than the contemplation of this long line of prophecies, concerning the antient nations whose annals have been recorded. We discern not the policy of men, but the counsels of God. We behold the Supreme Being himself opening the volume of his divine decrees, and disclosing futurity to the world. No attribute of the Deity is more astonishing and incomprehensible to finite intellects than his prescience of future events. To delineate beforehand the history of following ages; to mark the character and the destiny of nations unborn; to summon princes before they saw the light, to their appointed parts in the drama of life; to sketch over opulent cities and flourishing kingdoms *the line of devastation, and the plummet of emptiness;* to ascertain the regions of possibility, and exert a supreme power over non-existent nature, belongs only to HIM who beholds, as well as exists, from everlasting to everlasting. The events which we have gone over, so manifold, so varied, so minutely marked, and so remote from the time of their completion, could only have been foreseen by the Omniscience of that Being by whose Omnipotence they have been accomplished. Prophecy is a permanent miracle on earth: a voice which speaks from heaven, and proclaims its Author to all nations and ages.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of GREECE.

ANTIENT Greece comprehended that country which at present constitutes the southern part of Turkey in Europe. It was bounded on the east by the Egean sea, now called the Archipelago, and on the west by the Ionian sea or Adriatic gulph. Stretching on the north from a ridge of mountains which divide it from Macedonia, and from the river Strymon by which it is parted from Thrace, it extends southwards to the promontory of Tenarus, and the utmost extent of Peloponnesus. It is situated nearly in the middle of the northern Temperate zone.

Situated between the thirty-sixth and forty-first degree of latitude, Greece is every where surrounded by seas, except where it borders on Epirus and Macedonia. Thessaly, the most northern province, is an extensive and fruitful vale, surrounded by lofty mountains, and divided from Macedonia by Mount Olympus. Contiguous ridges extend to the Ceraunian mountains, and terminate in the high and stormy promontory of Acroceraunus. Pindus on the west, and Œta to the south, form the boundaries of this province, which contains the celebrated mountains of Olympus, Pelion, and Ossa. The river Peneus, after running between Ossa and Olympus, and winding through a country variegated by woods and meadows, flows into the delicious vale of Tempe, which has been so much the theme of poetical description. Between the foot of mount Œta and

and the sea, lies the narrow defile of Thermopylæ, the only entrance on the eastern side to the southern districts of Greece. The tract extending from Epirus and Thessaly to the isthmus of Corinth contains seven provinces: Etolia and Arcarnania, defended on one side by mountains almost impassable, and confined on the other by dangerous seas; Doris, a mountainous and rocky region; Locris and Phocis, fertile plains, but of small extent; Bœotia, a rich vale, abounding with seas and lakes, and almost surrounded by the mountains Parnassus, Helicon, Cythæron, and Parnes; and Attica, a rocky region producing little corn or pasture, but abounding in fruits, particularly figs and olives. These Grecian territories beyond the isthmus extend two hundred and sixty miles from east to west, and one hundred and fifty from north to south.

The peninsula of Peloponnesus contains seven districts: the narrow but extensive coast of Achaia; the fruitful vale of Argos; the level countries of Elis and Messenia, adapted to tillage and abounding in corn; Arcadia, the central region, which is a cluster of mountains; the large and fertile territory of Laconia, which is watered by the Eurotas; and the isthmus of Corinth, which is narrow and mountainous. The Peloponnesus, extending near two hundred miles in length, and a hundred and forty in breadth, is every where intersected with mountains, particularly the lofty ridges of Taygetus and Zarex, which branch through Laconia to Tænarum and Malea, the two most southern promontories of Greece*.

The climate and soil of Greece are peculiarly excellent and delightful. Equally exempted from the chilling rigours of the Pole and the sultry heats of the Torrid zone, almost every where surrounded by the sea, the atmosphere enjoys the happiest tempe-

* Strabo, lib. vii. Pausan. Messen.

rature,

rature, and abounds with every influence salutary to life, and propitious to man. The long winding range of sea-coast is indented with excellent harbours; the vales afford rich pastures; the middle grounds, corn, wine, and oil; and of the mountains by which it is defended and adorned, some are covered with lofty woods, some composed of the finest marble, others enriched with veins of the valuable metals. The felicity of the soil and climate, so friendly to animal as well as vegetable life, is peculiarly favourable to the organization of man. No region of the globe has ever produced the human form in such elegant proportions and exquisite beauty; or exhibited the human mind possessed of greater sensibility and force, or endued with faculties and talents so various and vivid.

The aborigines of Greece, like the first inhabitants of every country, were composed of savage tribes, who wandered in the woods without government or laws, and had little intercourse or communication with one another. They clothed themselves with the skins of wild beasts; retreated for shelter to rocks and caverns; lived on acorns, wild fruits, and raw flesh, and devoured the enemies whom they slew in battle.

Agreeable to the usual progress of society, the life of shepherds succeeded to that of savages. The migrating spirit and mutual depredations of neighbouring tribes, has always characterized this state. Accordingly we find, that in very early times many different and unknown people over-ran Greece, sometimes mixing with the antient inhabitants, and sometimes expelling them*. The rich vales which, by their spontaneous fertility, satisfied the pastoral possessors were the coveted territories; and these were continually changing their inhabitants. The verdant mead and the flourishing grove, the limpid

* Strabo, lib. v. & vii. Thucid. lib. i. cap. 2.

stream,

stream, successively blessed the strongest and most valiant. The richest plains of Greece became the scenes of continual war, while the vanquished tribes went in quest of unoccupied territories, or in their turn drove out a feebler race. The general disorders that necessarily took place in that state of society which is denominated barbarous, when the laws of the strongest prevailed, and possessions were held by the tenure of the sword, prevented neighbouring and rival tribes from settling in a fixed abode, and coalescing into one nation.

The physical form of Greece added to these obstacles in the way to civilization and refinement. Greece is cut by a chain of mountains, which forming several sinuosities, and throwing branches from one side to another, divide it into separate valleys, and raise above each barriers, which shut them up on all sides. The northern provinces, Thessaly and Bœotia, the first subjects of early tradition and antient history, were inclosed by mountains, and subject to inundations.

Thessaly was originally one vast lake, without a visible outlet, till an earthquake rending Olympus from Ossa, formed the valley of Tempe*. Lesser floods seemed also to have co-operated to expose this country to revolutions. When Homer makes Achilles the son of a goddess, and the second in descent by the paternal line from Jove, he gives a strong testimony to the convulsions in these early times, and the recent population of the country, as in the language of barbarous periods every thing new or uncommon comes down from heaven†.

Bœotia is a vale full of subterraneous caverns, and subject to earthquakes. The surrounding mountains pour in their torrents on all sides, and form rivers

* Herodot. lib. vii. cap. 129. Strabo, lib. viii. p. 430.

† Such were the ideas and expressions of the Americans when that country was first discovered.

and

and lakes, without such permanent outlets as the valley of Tempe gives to the waters of Thessaly. The flood of Ogyges was an uncommon inundation in this country, and drove the surviving inhabitants to seek for refuge in the mountainous province of Attica. The flood of Deucalion was a calamity of a similar kind in the provinces adjacent to Dodona, and the river Achelous*. These revolutions and phenomena concurred to prolong the state of ignorance, barbarity, depredation, and slaughter among the first inhabitants of Greece.

While tribes remain unconnected and insulated, there is no communication of ideas; knowledge is limited to the observation and experience of the invidual; and the last generation is no wiser than the first. Confessed wants, desired society, mutual communication, the intercourse of man with man, and of nation with nation; these are the moving powers that have raised the edifice of refinement and the arts. Whatever tends to bring mankind together; to wear off the asperity and prejudices of rival tribes; to form bonds of union, and to connect them in the same occupations and amusements; have been among all nations the first steps to improvement.

Evils in nature tend to cure themselves; and the first institutions in society take their origin from violence and disorder. Sudden incursions, mutual depredations, robbery by land, and piracy by sea, forming the genius of barbarous times, lead to leagues and confederacies for common safety and defence.

The first bond of union among the Greeks was the assembly of Amphictyons†. Like all political institutions, it was at first inconsiderable; nor did it arrive to its full strength and lustre but by

* Aristot. Meteorolog. lib. i. cap. 14.

† Αμφιχτιωνες.

gradual

gradual advances, and in a long series of years. The origin of this council is commonly ascribed to Amphictyon, the son of Deucalion, an antient king of Thessaly: but the account of Androtion, quoted by Pausanias, is more natural and probable; that it was an assembly of neighbours for mutual safety and defence. The utility of such an institution, in times of barbarity and disorder, soon appeared. Acquiring fresh forces from their union, the Grecian states began to act with concert, and to undertake distant expeditions.

The first of these was the expedition of the Argonauts, a real event, though blended with fiction. Homer, the chronicler of heroic times, mentions it in the Iliad. When Jason, Admetus, and the other chieftains of Thessaly, proclaimed their intention over the neighbouring provinces, the standard of glory was speedily surrounded by the flower of the Grecian youth. Peleus, Tydeus, Telamon, the fathers of those heroic chiefs, who, in the succeeding age, displayed their valour in the plains of Troy, are numbered among the leaders of the Argonauts. They directed their course to Colchis, on the eastern coast of the Euxine sea, a country in some degree civilized by an Egyptian colony, and abounding in gold, silver, and iron mines. It was a practice of the Colchians to extend fleeces of wool across the beds of the torrents, to collect the golden particles which were carried down from Mount Caucasus *: hence the adventure was named the expedition of the Golden Fleece. The Argonauts succeeded in their enterprise, and carried off the celebrated Medea, the daughter of king Aetas. While Greece began to move as a whole, the particular parts arranged themselves in a more perfect order, and

* Strabo, lib. xi. p. 499.

having felt the advantages of political confederacy, began to perceive the benefits of civil union.

Crete exhibited the first example of a regular community governed by laws. The wise institutions and policy of the Cretans are the most antient, and, according to Plato and Aristotle, the best regulations that ever were established in any portion of the Grecian dominions. The celebrity of this island, and the antiquity of its civilization, appear from the fables of the poets, who make it the birthplace of Jupiter and Saturn. History is no less decided in its praise, by representing it as the parent of ingenious inventions and useful improvements to the continent of Greece. It was early planted by a colony of Dorians. According to Homer * five different hordes held possession of the island, all apparently free. The necessity of defence, in an age when the sea was covered with robbers, and piracy was held honourable, suggested the idea of government; and the vicinity of the Cretans to the shores of Phœnicia and the coast of Egypt, gave them an early intercourse with nations more refined than themselves. The first institutions of policy are referred to Rhadamanthus; the final improvement is ascribed to Minos, who, from his numerous voyages and signal victories at sea, is distinguished by the appellation of Son of the Ocean. The form of government is such as we might expect from the first efforts of a rude people towards civilization. The idea of private property in land was unknown. The soil was cultivated by slaves, not for individuals, but for the state; the free citizens ate together at the public tables; and their families were subsisted from the common stock. The authority of the prince was great in war, but limited in peace. The institution of magistrates, one of the earliest advan-

* Odyss. lib. xix. ver. 175.

ces to regular government, and the discriminating mark between savage nations and civilized, was wisely adapted to the situation of the people. A severe morality was enforced by law; a proof of former irregularities and disorders. The youth were considered as members of the community; educated in public, and early trained to arms *. The same distinction of professions took place in Crete which was established in Egypt and the East†. From the prodigious number of slaves, distinguished in antiquity by the name of Periæcians, it is probable that the antient inhabitants had been conquered and reduced to subjection by the Grecian colony of Dorians. Minos, like all the legislators of antiquity, pretended to celestial communications, and frequently retired into a cave to hold intercourse with Jupiter. From his divine authority he derived his regal sceptre, his system of laws, and political institutions. The power which he had acquired by his pretences to inspiration, he confirmed and extended by his valour and enterprise. He directed the power of the state against those pirates who infested the seas; established security throughout the Egean; and is celebrated as the first Grecian prince who acquired the sovereignty of the ocean.

Such was the origin and the nature of the Cretan polity, which suggested improvements to Athens, and served as a model to Lacedemon.

The second Minos, king of Crete, supported the renown of his celebrated ancestor. He subdued several of the circumjacent isles; checked the piratical depredations of the Carians and Phœnicians; and subjected Athens to a yearly tribute of seven youths and as many virgins. The tributary cap-

* Arist. Polit. lib. ii. ch. 9 & 10.

† Ibid. lib. vii. ch. 10.

tives were drawn by lot from the people, who trembled at the annual return of the Cretan vessel. Murmurs and complaints arose against the government of Egeus; when Theseus offered his life in the service of his country. The fame of Theseus had already reached the ears of Minos, and his respect was converted into admiration, when he beheld the Athenian prince a voluntary captive. Minos received him with affection and hospitality proportioned to his merit, gave him his daughter Ariadne in marriage, and thenceforth delivered the Athenians from a contribution equally cruel and ignominious*.

The lines of truth are visible in this story, though it has been disguised and embellished by the fictions of the poets. This expedition to Crete laid the foundation of the improvements afterwards introduced by Theseus into the Athenian government, and gradually adopted by the neighbouring provinces. Before the time of Theseus, Attica was divided into twelve villages, altogether independent of each other; each enjoying a separate jurisdiction; governed by magistrates and customs of their own; frequently at war with each other, and sometimes with the sovereign; and without any bond of union, but their acknowledgment of one chief, whose authority was not sufficient to prevent or punish disorders. Such a situation opened a source of perpetual dissensions and hostilities; and each particular state was in miniature what the whole country had been before the era of the Amphictyons. Theseus, who had beheld in the more refined kingdom of Crete, the royal authority maintained while the liberties of the people were preserved, availed himself of the celebrated name which he had acquired to reform

* Odyss. lib. xi. ver. 320. Mitford, p. 44, &c.

the Athenian government. He dissolved the independent courts and jurisdictions in the several towns and districts; ordered the halls where they held their councils to be demolished; appointed a common-council for all the inhabitants of Attica; and built the prytaneum, or court-hall, for the meeting of this assembly *. From the example of Crete also, he saw the connection between religion and policy, and fortified his institutions by pious solemnities and ceremonies. He instituted the *panathenea*, as a common feast and sacrifice in honour of Athena or Minerva, for all the inhabitants of Attica, who, under the immediate protection of the goddess, thenceforth bore her name. To enlarge and people the capital, he invited strangers from all quarters, offered them the rights and privileges which were enjoyed by the citizens. He divided the Athenians, or rather found them divided, into three classes; the nobles, the husbandmen, and the mechanics; the executive and judicial powers, with the superintendency of religion, were appropriated to the former; the latter enjoyed freedom, and formed the legislative assembly. Thus Theseus became the founder of Athens and of regal government, and in a similar manner the first kingdoms of Greece were formed.

The war of Troy, which happened about seventy-nine years after the expedition of the Argonauts, affords a still stronger proof of the improvement to which Greece attained by the union of its different states. The first inhabitants of Greece and Asia Minor descended from a common origin, as, from the earliest accounts of time, they observed the same customs, worshipped the same gods, and spoke the same language. The western coast of Asia Minor is a picturesque and delightful country,

* Plut. in Thes.

and even excels Greece in fertility of soil and softness of climate. Many circumstances contributed to the rapid improvement and civilization of the inhabitants. The extent of the Asiatic plains, not divided like Greece by mountains and seas into small portions of difficult access, seems destined by nature to be the seat of powerful kingdoms. Little harassed by the incursions of barbarous tribes, except towards the sea-coast, they cultivated the arts, from the example of the Phrygians and Lydians, who flourished in opulence and tranquillity from the earliest ages*. The kingdom of Troy had subsisted five generations prior to the reign of Priam. An antient animosity, owing to mutual depredations, had long prevailed between the Greeks and Asiatics, and an hereditary quarrel taken place between the families of Priam and Agamemnon†. The rape of the beautiful but unfortunate Helen, by Paris, furnished a fresh occasion for hostilities; and a personal injury was considered as an affront to the whole nation. The authority of Agamemnon, brother of Menelaüs the injured husband; the extensive power of the family of Pelops, who were connected by propinquity, marriage, or alliance, with almost all the Grecian princes; the spirit of a barbarous age that delighted in military expeditions; the hopes of returning with renown, and laden with the spoils of Asia, soon induced the ardent warriors of Greece to flock to the standard of the confederated princes, and revenge the cause of their country. The preparations for the Trojan war were long. Ten years elapsed between the rape of Helen and the departure of the Greeks. Nor is the length of time surprizing. No such enterprise had ever been attempted in Greece. The whole nation

* Herodot. lib. i. † Diodor. lib. iv.

had

had confederated to make war for the first time. Assembling a great army, and equipping a numerous fleet, they had many precautions to take, and plans to form, with regard to their distant expedition, as they could expect no resources in Asia but those which they were to procure by the sword.

The historian of this war is Homer, whose inimitable poems are the most antient monuments of Grecian story. Epic poetry supposes the truth of events, though it admits of their embellishment. Homer arranges his incidents in poetical order, and heightens the lustre of heroic action, yet he builds on tradition; and as he possessed all the knowledge of his own times, he gives us the most accurate and perfect information concerning the religion, government, character, and manners of the heroic ages. As the Iliad of Homer is in the hands of the world, it is unnecessary to give the particulars of the expedition. After a siege of ten years, Troy was taken and set on fire. The taking of this city, 1184 years before the Christian era, is a celebrated epoch in the history of Greece. This war gave the first public display of Grecian valour; exhibited the Greeks and the Asiatics engaged in a fair field, and taught the world that Europe was destined to command Asia. The "Tale of Troy" was celebrated by all the poets of antiquity; furnished the subject of the two most perfect epic poems in the world, the Iliad and the Æneid; and passing into the poetry of all nations, became the everlasting entertainment of succeeding ages *.

The glory of the Greeks was purchased at a dear price; their triumphs were mournful. No event was ever more ruinous to a nation than this expedition to Asia. The flower of the nation was cut off in the

* Eternel entretien de siécles à venir. Racine.

Trojan plains; their most gallant chiefs and heroes perished in the war; the miserable remains of an army, consisting of more than a hundred thousand men, after having been tossed about on all the seas, and diminished by the disasters of a tempestuous voyage, found nothing on their arrival at home but disappointment and despair. During the long absence of the chiefs and princes from their native country, a door was opened to licentiousness and disorder. Expelled by usurpers, the warriors of Troy wandered from place to place in quest of new habitations, and addicted themselves to a predatory life. The Trojans who survived the destruction of their country, lived in a similar manner. The concurrence of these events produced a nursery of robbers and pirates, who for many years troubled the repose of the seas and the continent. Society went back to the period of barbarity again; disunited tribes began to live by plunder; Greece was without movement, and continued in a state of mournful tranquillity, always an unnatural state for Greece.

A new event awakened them from this state, and again put all Greece in motion. Eighty years after the destruction of Troy, a great revolution took place, which totally changed the affairs of the Peloponnesus, and in its consequences gave new inhabitants to the whole western coast of Asia Minor. The rival families of Perseus and Pelops antiently contended for the dominion of the Grecian peninsula. The fortunes of the Pelopidæ prevailed, and the descendants of Hercules, the most illustrious hero of the Perseid line, were divested of their possessions, and driven into banishment. The exiles were first received by the Athenians, whose enlightened and humane policy rendered Attica the common refuge and asylum of the miserable. Their leader Hyllus was afterwards adopted by Epalius the king of Doris, and the

the death of their benefactor soon raised the descendants of Hercules from the condition of suppliant exiles to that of sovereign princes. But the wilds of Œta and Parnassus were little fitted to satisfy the heirs of the family of Perseus. Their ambition was long repressed by the growing greatness of the Pelopidæ and the glory of Agamemnon. After the disasters of that prince, they twice attempted, unsuccessfully, to break through the Corinthian isthmus, and to recover their antient dominion in Argos and Lacedemon. At length Temenus, Cresphontes, and Aristodemus, great-grandsons of Hyllus, associating with themselves their kinsman Oxylus, an Ætolian chieftain, crossed the Corinthian gulph from Naupactus, with a powerful army, to reclaim possession of Peloponnesus. They defeated Tesamenus, the son of Orestes, and divided his kingdoms. Cresphontes took possession of Messenia; Temenus of Argos; Aristodemus falling in the course of the war, his twin-sons, Eurysthenes and Procles, were made joint kings of Lacedemon; Corinth was given to Aletes, also a descendant of Hercules; and Eleia was allotted to Oxylus.

This revolution in Peloponnesus was followed by a general commotion. The nations who were first attacked, threw themselves upon their neighbours. The people, impelled by one another, sought for new establishments. The Trojan war had made them acquainted with Asia Minor, which now offered an asylum to the wandering tribes. The Achæans, expelled from Laconia by the Dorians, first settled in these new abodes; fixed their habitation between Ionia and Mysia; and gave the whole country the name of Æolia, from their ancestor Æolus.

The Ionians, compelled to quit Peloponnesus, took refuge in Attica; but multiplying to such a degree that the country could not maintain them, Nileus,

leus, the son of Codrus, conducted them to Asia. They settled in a region that was bounded by Caria and by Lydia, and called the whole country by the name of Ionia.

The third colony which passed at this period from Greece to Asia, was composed of Dorians, who, dissatisfied with Megara, which had been allotted to them, established themselves in that part of the Lesser Asia, which from them was called Doria. They built Halicarnassus, Cnidus, and other cities, and spread themselves into Rhodes, Cos, and the adjacent islands.

Four distinctions of the Grecian people now arose out of the two original hordes, the Ionian and Æolian. Four principal dialects marked these distinctions: the Attic used by the Athenians; the Ionic by the people of Ionia; the Doric by the Lacedemonians and Argives; and the Æolic by the Bœotians and the inhabitants of Æolia.

The return of the Heraclidæ, or the Dorian conquest, produced a revolution in Peloponnesus, and changed the state of Greece. The Argian princes of the family of Pelops, from length of time, had gained such established power, and the legal preeminence which they claimed seems to have been so generally admitted, that under them one government in some degree pervaded the peninsula; the administration of law gained consistency and form; civility advanced, and the arts began to appear. But the Dorian conquest checked the progress of refinement, and introduced that state of rudeness and barbarity in which the new lords of the country had lived among their native mountains. The first care of the conquering chiefs was to secure their acquisitions against any attempts of their former possessors; the next seems to have been to prevent aspiring individuals from acquiring a superiority over the rest. By

these they hoped to provide against foreign invasion and domestic jealousy. But in the partition of their country, causes of discord arose. The boundaries of their several allotments, inaccurately ascertained, led to disputes and hostilities. After so violent a revolution, also, the unsettled state of government frequently called for the strong arm of power to repress outrage and enforce order. Violence arose sometimes on the part of the princes*; and a people unpolished, but high-spirited, who had conquered for themselves as well as their chieftains, were little disposed to submit to any exertion of authority not warranted by established customs. Thus in every state internal dissensions were seldom interrupted but by external war; and Peloponnesus was relapsing into a state of anarchy and barbarism, similar to that in which it had existed before Pelops and Hercules. As a counterpoise to these calamities, there were two Grecian institutions which tended gradually to introduce tranquillity and order. We have mentioned the assembly of Amphictyons as one of the first bonds of union and sources of improvement among the Greeks.

The return of the Heraclidæ, otherwise productive of much disorder and bloodshed, greatly extended the salutary influence of the Amphictyonic council. As the Dorians were constituent members of that assembly, all the states where their power was established were entitled to the same privilege. Athens, chief of the Ionic tribe, was also an Amphictyonic state; and all states of Ionic origin thence derived or claimed a right to have their representatives in that celebrated council. Every independent state had a right of itself, or in conjunction with another, to send two deputies to the assembly. One, under the title of Pylagoras, who was entrusted with the

* Thucyd. lib. i. cap. 13. Arist. lib. iv. cap. 13.

civil concerns of his constituents, was elected by the suffrages of his fellow-citizens; the other, called Hieromnemon, from his particular privilege of superintending religion and its ceremonies, was appointed by lot. The vernal meeting was held at Delphi; the autumnal at Thermopylæ. The intention of this confederacy, the nature of their jurisdiction, and the extent of their power, may be gathered from the oath taken by every member of the council, preserved in an oration of Æschines *. "I swear that I will never subvert any Amphictyonic city; I will never stop the courses of their water either in war or in peace. If any such outrages be committed, I will oppose them by force of arms, and destroy those cities which are guilty of such attempts. If any devastation shall be committed in the territory of the god; if any shall be privy to such an offence, or entertain any design against the temple, I will use my hands, my feet, my whole force, to bring the offending party to condign punishment." The most dreadful imprecations were denounced against those who should violate this oath. From this it appears, that the assembly of Amphictyons was a confederacy for mutual safety and defence, confirmed by the sanctions of religion. This institution established a kind of law of nations among the Greeks, tended to check the violence of internal war, and to prevent the horrors incident to the barbarity of former times.

Religion has ever been the most effectual support of human laws and institutions; and no instance occurs in history of a people having been civilized and brought under subordination to legal government, without the influence of a real or pretended inter-

* Æschin. de Falsa Legat. Vide also Leland, Hist. Phil. Macedon.

course

course with Heaven. Delphi was the principal seat of the Grecian religion, and the oracle of Apollo established there was the most celebrated of all antiquity. The Dorian conquest contributed to spread its importance and celebrity. Superstition, which is as antient and universal as human nature, had been formed into a regular system in Egypt from the earliest accounts of history. A prodigious and crowded population rendered a refined polity necessary; the magnificence of temples, the splendour of ceremonies, the frequency of festivals, the solemnity of mysteries, impressed the multitude with religious awe; and the nobility of the nation, forming at the same time the hereditary priesthood, had a powerful ascendency over the minds of a gloomy and superstitious nation. The prediction of future events was a part of their office, and a great engine of their power. From the account delivered to Herodotus by the priests of Dodona *, it is probable that the Grecian oracles took their rise from this native land and celebrated seat of superstition. In the fabulous language of antiquity, a black pigeon flew from Thebes in Egypt to Dodona, and perching on an oak, proclaimed with a human voice, "That an oracle of Jupiter should be established." Or, as interpreted by the historian, a female attendant belonging to the temple of Jupiter, at Thebes on the Nile, had been carried off by Phœnician pirates to Thesprotia, and there sold as a slave. Sensible of the superiority which her education in a more civilized country, and her attendance on the temple of Jupiter, gave her over ignorant barbarians, she availed herself of these advantages, and pretended to disclose secrets and foretel future events. Under the shade of a venerable oak she delivered, in the name of Jupiter, mysteri-

* Herod. lib. ii. cap. 54.

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ous answers to the wondering multitude: her reputation and success increased by the credulity and admiration of the people; a temple was built to Jove, and the oracle of Dodona established.

Similar institutions prevailed in various provinces of Greece; but the most celebrated of all was the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. On the southern side of Parnassus, the mountain-crags form a natural amphitheatre of difficult access. In the midst was a deep cavern which none could approach without trembling and horror. From this opening ascended an exhalation which made the head turn giddy. Among people, unenlightened by philosophy, the phrenzy occasioned by this vapour passed for a divine afflatus or inspiration; and it was believed, that in this mysterious manner a god communicated his will to mortal men. Around this cavern the temple of Apollo was built; and on the mouth of the chasm a tripod was placed, elevated on which, and surrounded by prophets, a selected virgin delivered the oracles of the god. It was only on particular days, called happy, that the Pythian priestess saw into futurity and prophesied. For that purpose she prepared herself by purifications, fasts, and sacrifices. When the fortunate day arrived, the laurel-tree that grew before the gate of the temple and the earth around it, were perceived to shake. Soon as the virgin was intoxicated with the vapour, her hair stood erect, her look grew wild, she foamed at the mouth, and appeared altogether frantic. Then she uttered several indistinct words, which the priests carefully collected, and afterwards arranged according to their pleasure; for these responses were almost always dark, enigmatic, and capable of different interpretations.

Before the Heraclidæ set out on their expedition to recover the dominions of their ancestors, they consult-

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ed this oracle; and receiving a favourable response, which was confirmed by subsequent events, they diffused the fame and enlarged the influence of the Delphian shrine. It became the object of universal veneration to barbarians as well as Greeks, and its celebrity soon extended over the world. The affairs of public and private life were under its direction. No business of moment, in war or in peace, among nations or individuals, was undertaken and carried on without consulting the oracle. In circumstances of calamity and distress, of perplexity and doubt, consolation and relief were sought from the inspiration of the Delphian shrine. Offerings on these occasions were necessary; the great and the opulent endeavoured to conciliate the favour of the deity by donations of great value. Afterwards vanity came in aid to superstition, in bringing riches to the temple. The names of those who were distinguished by their pious benefactions, were always registered; and when statues, tripods, and other valuable ornaments were given, they were publicly exhibited in honour of the giver. During the age of Homer, the magnificence and opulence of Delphi were already proverbial; and when Xerxes undertook his memorable expedition against Greece, the dedications at the shrine, accumulated from the superstition and vanity of nations and ages, were held equivalent to the revenues of the monarch of Asia *.

The superintendence of this precious depository belonged to the Amphictyons. Their importance gradually rose from this patronage, till in the course of time they attained to the chief direction of all affairs in Greece. Difference of time and circumstances produced an alteration in this as in all other institutions; but the general intention of the assem-

* Dissertat. sur l'Oracl. par M. Hardion.

bly,

bly, and the great object of its directors, was to form a complete representation of all Greece; or, as it is called by Cicero, who translates Demosthenes, *commune Græciæ concilium.*

The origin of things in nature appears inadequate to their completion. The temple of Apollo at Delphi, so renowned in antiquity, was at first no more than a thatched cottage, overshadowed with the branches of a laurel which grew before the gate. The assembly of Amphictyons, at the beginning merely an association of neighbours for mutual defence, united at length in one plan of politics the unconnected or hostile powers; became the centre of union to distant and divided states; proved the great spring of action in Greece; and, by the unanimity which it inspired, enabled the Greeks to defend their liberty against the collected force of the Persian empire *.

The revival, or rather institution, of the Olympic games, in the period which we are now contemplating, farther contributed to allay the animosities of war and contention, to unite the Grecian name, and to hasten the progress of civilization and refinement. From time immemorial it had been customary among the Greeks to hold frequent meetings for trials of strength and activity, expressive of their character, and carrying a reference to that state of perpetual warfare which prevailed in the more antient times of Greece. As an image and representation of war, the passion of the times, they were introduced at funerals, in honour of departed heroes †. That elegance of imagination which was congenial to the Greeks, and which distinguished them from other

* Thirty-one Amphictyonic cities undertook the defence of Greece in the Persian war. Plutarch. in Themistocl.

† Iliad lib. xxiii. ver. 630. Odyss. lib. xxiv. ver. 87.

nations

nations in every period of their history, joined to the contention of arms a gentler contest for a prize in the arts of poetry and music. Homer assisted at a festival of this kind in the island of Delos *; and, on a similar occasion at Cholchis in Eubœa, Hesiod obtained the prize for music and verse †. These poetical contests were connected with the ceremonies of religion, and made a part of the worship of Apollo. These games, consisting of athletic exercises, intermixed and relieved by music and dancing, resembled the tilts and tournaments in the ages of chivalry. Men of high rank only presumed to engage in them; a large concourse of people attended as spectators; and judges were appointed to determine the merit of the candidates, and distribute the prizes. They became a stated amusement in the courts of princes; but their most solemn celebration was at the funerals of illustrious men. The heroes of Homer entered the list in these martial amusements ‡, and all the magnificence and splendour of the age was displayed on the occasion. The funeral of Patroclus, described in the Iliad, may be considered as an example of what the poet could imagine most complete. The games, in which prizes were contended for on that occasion, were the chariot-race, the foot-race, boxing, wrestling, throwing the quoit and javelin, shooting with the bow, and fencing with the spear. In times when every thing was determined by the law of arms, when personal vigour and prowess decided in the day of war, and when a battle was only a multitude of single combats, such trials of strength and agility were contests of honour, and reflected lustre on men of the highest rank.

* Thucyd. lib. iii.
† Hesiod. Op. & Di. lib. ii. ver. 272.
‡ Odyss. lib. xxiv. ver. 87.

According to Homer*, Eleia, in Peloponnesus, had been, on various occasions, the scene of athletic games, celebrated with uncommon pomp, and frequented by chiefs from different parts of Greece. But no periodical festival was established similar to that which afterward became so famous under the title of the Olympic Games. In the heroic times the games were only occasional solemnities, and were distinguished by characteristical differences from the Olympian †. In the former the prizes were intrinsically valuable, and the value often considerable: in the latter they were merely honorary; a crown or chaplet, formed of a branch of laurel or wild olive, was the sole reward of the victor. After the age of Homer, in consequence of the long calamities, extensive migrations, and unceasing hostilities, arising from the Dorian conquest, Greece seemed to have changed its character, and the memory of the antient games was nearly lost. While the Peloponnesus was thus torn by civil dissensions and wasted by a pestilence, Iphitus, a descendant of Oxylus, succeeded to the throne of Elis. Concerned at the calamities of his country, and anxious to find a remedy to the evils under which it laboured, this benevolent and active prince sent a solemn embassy to Delphi, to supplicate information from the deity of the place. The Pythoness returned for answer, "That the Olympic festival must be restored, the non-observance of which had drawn down the indignation of the god to whom it was dedicated, and of Hercules the hero by whom it was instituted; and that a general cessation of arms must be immediately proclaimed to all those cities who were desirous of partaking in the games." The other people of the Peloponnesus, jealous of the

* Iliad. lib. xi. ver. 697. lib. ii. ver. 629.
† Strabo, lib. viii. p. 355.

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pre-eminence thus assumed by the Eleians, sent a common deputation to Delphi, to enquire concerning the authenticity of the oracle. The priestess of Apollo, ever disposed to favour the views of kings and legislators, adhered to her former answer, and commanded them to submit to the authority of the Eleians, in ordering and establishing the antient laws and customs of their forefathers." The injunction of the oracle was speedily diffused through the remotest parts of Greece, and Iphitus proceeded to model his institution. It was ordained that a festival should be held near the temple of Jupiter at Olympia, and be repeated at the termination of every fourth year; that this festival should consist in solemn sacrifices to Jupiter and Hercules, and in games dedicated to their honour; and that for some time before the commencement, and after the conclusion, of these sacred shows, a general armistice should take place through Greece. For his own people, the Eleians, Iphitus procured advantages of a singular nature. A tradition prevailed that the Heraclidæ consecrated the whole territory to the god, and denounced the most dreadful curses on all who should invade or refuse to defend it against its invaders. Through the influence of Iphitus and the oracle, the people acquiesced in this tradition. A character of sacredness became attached to the whole Eleian people, as the hereditary priesthood of Jupiter; and, in the most turbulent times of the Grecian republics, the territory of Eleia was defended by a wall of sanctity.

Iphitus deserves to be styled the founder, rather than the restorer, of the games; for he was the first that reduced the festival into a regular system and form; united the sacred and political institutions; and, by the establishment of the Olympiad, gave it that principle of life and duration which enabled it to

survive

survive the laws, the liberties, and the political existence of Greece *.

Such an institution as the Olympiad must have been attended with the most beneficial effects to society. By the general armistice which was established, it suspended the hostilities and softened the animosities of a barbarous age. Curiosity, religion, ambition, the love of fame, invited all descriptions of men to this public theatre. Greece assembled for the first time; and scattered tribes, unconnected with one another, gradually became one people. Assembled by the same religious rites, and partaking the same amusements, their prejudices wore off, and their manners became refined: united by the same interests, they bent their efforts in one direction, and acted with the union and the force of nations. The principle of social life being once kindled, continued to flame. Public spectacles became more and more frequent; the Isthmian, the Pythian, and the Nemean games, were instituted in imitation of the Olympian; and all Greece was in movement and action. To the distant communities and colonies of Grecian extraction, the Olympiad served as a common bond of alliance and point of re-union. This celebrated festival continually attracted characters the most distinguished for abilities and enterprise, and concentred the genius and fame of the neighbouring states as well as distant dominions of Greece. The sacred ties of hospitality were renewed and strengthened; alliances formed between communities; a sense of general interest and national honour perceived and promoted.

From this period the Greeks more particularly merit our attention, as from these early circum-

* West, Dissert. Olymp. Games.

stances

stances they assumed a character which they always preserved. Their curiosity was marked with all that keenness of vivacity which the novelty of ideas and the first fruits of knowledge always inspire. Their frequent opportunities of assembling together, and displaying their talents on a great theatre, produced an activity, an inquietude, the love of adventure, and the desire of distinction. The ignorance and credulity of the age; the awful and mysterious nature of the oracle; the heroic actions; the fables, and the prodigies, which they heard and believed; raised and nourished a passion for the marvellous. The names of those who instituted the Olympic games; the great men whose actions they recalled to view; the gods to whom they were consecrated; the kings and heroes who entered the lists; the crowns distributed to the conquerors amidst the applauses of their country; kindled that noble emulation and love of fame, which prepared Greece for great actions, and led to an era of glory. This early character descended through every period of their history. The same curiosity and passion for the marvellous attended them in their most enlightened age; their ardour and restlessness remained amid the most settled times of their republics; and the spirit of emulation still continued the chief spring of the Grecian character, which produced great men, perfected the fine arts, and introduced the sublime in action, speculation, and sentiment.

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CHAP. XII.

Of the Government, Religion, Arts, and Manners, of the early GREEKS.

THE form of government which prevailed among the Greeks in the heroic times, as among all barbarous tribes, was that of limited monarchies, or rather monarchal republics. This mode of political rule seems natural to mankind in the first stages of society. Every nation in North America has a king, a senate, and an assembly of the people. The royal office is elective, but it is for life; the sachems form the ordinary council of the chief, in which all national affairs are deliberated and determined in the first instance; but in the greatest of all, which is declaring war, the king and sachems call a national assembly, communicate their resolution to the people, and sacrifice an animal. Those among the tribes who approve the war, partake of the sacrifice, throw the hatchet into a tree after the example of the king, and join in the subsequent war-songs and dances. Those who disapprove, take no part of the sacrifice, but retire.

Among the antient Germans, as described by Tacitus, the same form of government was established. Kings were chosen from the nobility, whose power was extensive in war, but limited in peace; ordinary affairs were transacted in the council of the chiefs; on extraordinary occasions there was an assembly of the whole people. It was the prerogative of the king to lead in war, and to enjoy pre-eminence in peace; but his authority depended on the concurrence of the inferior chieftains. On great occasions,

sions, and when their passions were agitated, the people were accustomed to assemble in a body, and, without any concerted form of democracy, assumed the sovereignty to themselves.

The Grecian states, in like manner, during the heroic ages, were governed by kings or chiefs, whose power was limited by laws and established customs, controlled by inferior chieftains, and directed by a popular assembly.

In the kingdom of Phæacia, as described in the Odyssey, we have a picture at full length of these mixed and limited governments. A king or archon, twelve peers honoured with the name of kings, and an assembly of the people, shared and divided the supreme authority. "There are twelve chiefs," says Alcinous, "who rule over the people, and I am the thirteenth *." He is accordingly obliged to call a council of his nobles before he can venture to furnish Ulysses with a single ship to transport him to his native country.

We find in Homer the assembly of the people as well as the council of the nobles or peers. The AGORA, or place of meeting, and haranguing in public assemblies, are often mentioned: to excel in eloquence was an object of ambition, and esteemed one of the highest qualities and ornaments of a chief. But the power of the people, though exerted with enthusiasm on extraordinary occasions, was far from being a legal or constitutional check. The struggle lay between the king and nobles; and the last finally prevailed, as they must ever do against a king who is not supported by an adequate popular power. Phæacia was rather a confederacy of thirteen little princely domains than one great kingdom. Each archon was a king in his own state or district, and, in case of

* Odyss. lib. viii. ver. 390.

a foreign

a foreign war, commanded his own division in the general camp. The first archon or ruler of the confederacy, though originally raised to the throne by the voice of the people *, claimed the regal office to be hereditary in his family. The other chiefs were frequently disposed to dispute the hereditary succession, and to make the sceptre elective. Ulysses, saved from shipwreck on the isle of Phæacia, thus addresses himself to the queen of Alcinous: "May the gods grant you to live in peace, and to transmit to your children whatever rewards or honours the people hath given you." Though the succession was in general hereditary, it was sometimes set aside in favour of another branch of the royal line, or one of the nobles who had more power than the heir apparent.

The chief and unquestioned prerogatives of the kings were, to command the armies in the time of war, to decide private quarrels in peace, and to preside over the worship of the gods. In many respects the political state of the early Greeks resembled that of the antient Germans: but while among the latter a particular order of men superintended the ceremonies of religion, and exercised a power equal, and sometimes superior, to the regal; among the former the offices of king and priest were vested in the same person. The kings, in Homer, generally descended from Jupiter, always exercise the pontifical functions, preside over the sacrifices, and are solicitous to establish their power upon divine authority. Hence the veneration of the people for the title and office of kings was augmented, as they believed that they held their sovereignty by the appointment of Jove.

* Aristot. Polit. lib. iii. cap. 14. Thucyd. lib. i. cap. 9.

Plato informs us, that the sun, moon, stars, and earth, had been the earliest objects of Grecian worship, as they were of the barbarous nations in his time. This appears indeed to have been the natural and original superstition of all nations in the unenlightened periods of their history. This rude and simple theology of the Greeks soon received large augmentation from the Egyptians, the chief inventors of religious ceremonies; from the Thracians, to whom they were indebted for the name of religion *; and from the Pelasgian and Phœnician colonies which settled among them. Twelve principal divinities presided over the powers of nature, and the greater departments of the universe †. All of these, except Juno and Vesta, were adopted from the Egyptian theology ‡. Polytheism, thus introduced, soon increased to an amazing degree. The greater and more powerful divinities are chiefly described by Homer; but Hesiod, in his Theogony, makes the whole number amount to thirty thousand.

The Grecian superstition, though partly introduced from abroad, received additions and improvements from the physical influence of the climate and soil, and the elegant imagination of the inhabitants. Whatever dazzled or delighted their fancy, announced to the Greeks the presence of a divinity. Hence they peopled nature with new inhabitants, who, though generally invisible, sometimes appeared to their favoured votaries. Oreads resided in the mountain, Dryads in the wood, Naiads in the spring; the sea possessed its Tritons and its Nereids, and every river its watery god: the variety of the seasons

* Θϱησκεια.

† Juno, Vesta, Minerva, Ceres, Diana, Venus, Mars Mercurius, Jovi, Neptunus, Vulcanus, Apollo.—*Ennius.*

‡ Herodot. lib. ii. p. 123.

produced the Hours; the Muses and the Graces sprung from the elegant genius and fine taste of the people.

Religious duties among the Greeks consisted in sacrifices and lustrations, prayers and songs of praise. That due honour was paid them by offering victims on their altars, is the reason assigned in the Iliad for the affection of the several divinities for particular nations or individuals. The anger of the gods is frequently denounced against the guilty, and the protection of heaven promised to the innocent and the just. But we often find the gods prompting the most atrocious and criminal enterprises: it was believed that they could be soothed by flattery, and bribed by presents or sacrifices; and their approbation was inferred not from the merit, but from the success of an action. Pure morality, like pure religion, is not the offspring of a barbarous age.

An apprehension of invisible but powerful agents in nature, the arbiters of human life, and disposers of happiness or misery, distinguishes mankind in every period of society, and strongly marks the character of savage and barbarous tribes as well as of civilized nations. But among all the people, with whose history we are acquainted, the opinions which they entertained concerning religion and a future state were in proportion to the progress they had made in knowledge, refinement, and virtue. The conception of divine attributes is drawn from the ideas of human excellence: heaven is the picture of the earth, and God the image of man. Homer's deities are human beings on a larger scale, with the same passions, propensities, and vices. Jupiter, the chief of the celestial regents, was limited in knowledge, deficient in goodness, and bounded in power. He was under the strict controul of the Fates; and the inferior gods and goddesses, who

were

were commonly disposed to disturb his administration, paid him reverence only on account of his superior strength *.

The immortality of the soul, of which an original and universal perception or sentiment seems to be impressed by the hand of Nature on the human mind, formed also an article in the creed of the early Greeks. But the enjoyments as well as improvements of such a state, which at all times surpass the faculties of men to conceive, were but imperfectly comprehended by tribes just emerging from barbarity. The Hades of Homer is dark and melancholy; the situation of the departed shades is dreary; and heroes, the most celebrated for their virtues or valour, are sullen and dejected. The idea of rewards and punishments is hinted; but the remarkable expression of Achilles, "that he would rather be a day-labourer on earth, than king over all the shades in the lower regions," presents a gloomy and uncomfortable view of the Grecian Elysium.

The history of the Egyptians, and the nations of Asia, seldom instructs us in the progress of the arts. From the want of monuments and historical details, we cannot trace the process of discoveries, nor the progress of the human mind in inventions and improvements. But the Grecian annals, independent of the striking and splendid events which they contain, convey to us the history of the arts, and the gradations of refinement. From the period in which they began to emerge from savage ferocity to their most advanced stages of civilization, we can trace the steps and follow the progress of the human genius in all that improves and adorns life, and renders it convenient or delightful.

* Iliad. viii. ver. 210.

From an early intercourse with nations more civilized and refined than themselves, the Greeks are not entitled to the praise of invention in most of the arts. They had received the glimmerings of science and the rudiments of art from Egypt and Phœnicia. But the point of perfection to which they carried the discoveries imparted to them by other nations, the elegance and beauty of which they set the examples in all the works of taste, amply compensate for the merit of the invention. Their progress in policy and improvement, indeed, was slow. While at an early era after the Flood we find pomp and magnificence prevail in Egypt and in Asia, the Greeks were roaming savages or wandering shepherds; and we can now only mark the origin of those arts which, in a subsequent part of their history, attained to perfection.

When military honours and rewards are chiefly coveted, and from the imperfection of civil government property is insecure, great advances cannot be made in the arts that contribute to convenience and luxury. As the early Greeks were a pastoral people, their wealth consisted chiefly in their flocks and herds, and agriculture, being only a secondary mean of subsistence, was in an imperfect state. The implements of husbandry were rude, and, from the scarcity of iron, the plough was made of wood. Barley was the first grain cultivated in Greece, and furnished the ordinary food both of men and of horses. As a memorial of their antient life, the Athenians, in subsequent ages, used cakes of barley in their sacrifices. At first they ate their grain as it came from the husk, half-roasted; but in the time of Homer it was bruised between two large stones with the hand, and formed into bread. The art of meliorating and fertilizing the ground by means of manure was known in the heroic ages. The culture of

of the vine, which is ascribed to Bacchus, was early understood, and the climate and soil of Greece were favourable to the grape. It was their chief article of luxury, and sometimes kept to a great age *. The olive was a native of Greece; but the benefit to be derived from its fruit, in cheering the melancholy gloom of night, was unknown to the Greeks †. The art of making oil was discovered, but the use of lamps was unknown, and they were lighted by fires of wood in their apartments. Figs, pears, apples, and pomegranates, are the only fruits that Homer describes in the garden of Alcinous.

Architecture, which at a subsequent period produced models of elegance and taste for succeeding ages to study and to imitate, arose from inconsiderable beginnings. The houses of the Greeks were simple cabins, constructed, in an artless manner, of earth and clay. In the time of Vitruvius, the remains of a building were still visible, in which the Areopagites assembled in the commencement of their institution. It was a mean edifice, and was covered with sods. But the houses of the opulent were built of polished stone, and consisted of two floors, the lower of which was distributed into four apartments. The labyrinth at Crete, and other amazing structures, attributed to Dædalus, are fictions of the later poets, of which the silence of Homer and Herodotus is a sufficient proof.

Prometheus, who was contemporary with the Titans, is said to have taught the Greeks the art of working in metals ‡. Among the Greeks, as among all the nations of antiquity, copper was one of the first metals brought into use, and supplied the place

* Odyss. lib. iii. ver. 390.
† Goguet, Orig. of Arts, vol. ii. p. 192.
‡ Æschil. in Prometh. Vinct. ver. 501.

of iron before the latter was invented. At the time of the Trojan war, not only arms, but the instruments of the mechanic arts, were made of copper. Iron was held in such estimation, that in the games which Achilles celebrated in honour of Patroclus, he proposed a ball of that metal as a considerable prize *.

Ornamental works in gold, silver, and ivory, are frequently mentioned by Homer, but these appear to have been imported from Egypt or Phœnicia. We find in the Odyssey, a Phœnician merchant offering to sale a gold necklace set with amber †. A silver bowl is described in the Iliad as surpassing all productions of a similar kind, for, says the poet, " Sidonian artists made it, and Phœnicians brought it over the sea ‡."

Commerce, in the heroic ages, appears to have been chiefly carried on by Phœnician merchants. Trade was not esteemed an honourable profession, and a pirate was more respected than a merchant. The Greeks, however, were not without traffick both by sea and land. They had advanced beyond the rude ideas of barter or exchange, and had discovered a common measure of commodities. The instrument of commerce, which we call money, has been different in different countries. Salt in Abyssinia; shells in some parts on the coast of India; tobacco in Virginia; sugar in the West-India islands, have been employed for this purpose. As the Greeks were a pastoral people, cattle became the instrument of exchange. The golden armour of Glaucus, according to Homer, was worth a hundred oxen; the brazen armour of Diomede worth nine: at the funeral

* Iliad. xxiii. ver. 118. † Lib. xv. ver. 458.
‡ Lib. xxiii. ver. 744.

games

games on the death of Patroclus, a tripod was valued at twelve oxen, a female slave at four.

War was by way of eminence the art in which the Greeks sought to excel during the heroic ages. Martial achievements were held the only splendid actions, and some circumstances in Greece favoured the improvement of the military art. Divided into small states, in the neighbourhood of each other, always in a state of open war or suspicious peace, attention to the art of war became indispensably necessary both to the individual and the community. Accordingly we find that the Greeks, in the heroic times, had improved on that tumultuary warfare alone known to many barbarous nations. Subordination and steadiness in the soldier, which distinguish an army from a mob, prevailed among the Grecian troops. Their defensive armour consisted of a helmet adorned with plumes, which covered the head, a corslet which defended the breast, greaves of brass that descended to the feet, and an ample shield that turned in all directions to oppose every hostile assault. Their principal weapon was the javelin, which they threw with amazing and almost incredible force. When they missed their aim, they drew their swords and rushed impetuously on the foe. Bows, slings, and darts, were chiefly employed by warriors of inferior reputation. War-chariots supplied the want of cavalry. We find no chief without his car, drawn generally by two, sometimes by three horses, and these make a principal figure in the battles of Homer. Though the art of forming an army in phalanx was commonly practised, yet the office of a general in directing its operations was lost in the passion of the great men to signalize themselves by acts of personal prowess and skill in arms. Achilles and Hector, the first heroes of the Iliad, excel not in the capacity of generals, but of

 fighting

fighting soldiers. When a battle consisted of a multitude of single combats, the office of a general was to exhort the troops to action, and to lead the way, rather than to command them.

The speculative sciences are neither the occupation nor amusement of a barbarous age. A few simple calculations of arithmetic, and such a knowledge of the heavenly bodies as was necessary to direct the course of the mariner, and determine the operations of husbandry, summed up the science of the early Greeks. The revolutions of the moon have been first employed by all nations to ascertain the length of the year: but twelve lunar periods being unequal to the annual revolution of the sun, the stars were soon found to be more accurate astronomical guides. Hesiod, accordingly, marks the seasons for the labours of agriculture by the rising and setting of the stars, which in his age were grouped in constellations, nearly in the same manner as at present. Ignorance of astronomy is mentioned by Æschylus, as a mark of the deepest barbarism, and the observation of the stars as the first thing necessary to civilized life*.

The manners of the early Greeks, similar to those of our German ancestors, as described by Tacitus, were such as naturally arose from a defective government and an uncultivated state of society. Military expeditions, by land for plunder or glory, and piracy at sea, were common, and reckoned honourable. When a people have arms always in their hands, and esteem valour the chief virtue, little horror is annexed to the shedding of blood. Many of the heroes in the Iliad had been guilty of this crime, and fled their country, to avoid the punishment which they expected from the relations

* Prometh. Vinct. p. 13.

of

of the deceased. When every man is judge in his own cause, and private revenge is exercised by the individual, not transferred to the community, society must exhibit a scene of bloodshed and treachery.

Humanity and compassion are not the virtues of barbarous nations; and the heroes of Homer seldom gave quarter to a vanquished foe. "Why so tender-hearted?" said Agamemnon to Menelaus, seeing him hesitate while a Trojan of high rank was begging his life. "Let none of the Trojans escape destruction from our hands, not the child within his mother's womb." The poet gives his own approbation to this barbarous speech: "It was justly spoken," says Homer, "and he turned his brother's mind."

Hospitality to strangers is the virtue of a people in this state of society. "The guest and the suppliant," says Homer, "should be considered as near relations; the stranger and the poor are from Jove." The character of Axylas in the Iliad forms a perfect example of patriarchal simplicity, goodness, and hospitality. The social affections too, and private friendship, as they acted in a narrow sphere, were powerful and boundless in their operations. Achilles rushes to certain death to revenge the cause of his friend, yet refuses to the prayers of an aged parent the melancholy consolation of interring the remains of his favourite son, till the corresponding image of his own father strikes his mind, and at once melts him to pity*.

The union of the highest dignities with employments now reckoned mean, is characteristic of uncultivated nations. The handicraft arts were exercised by princes. Ulysses made his own bridal

* Iliad. xxiv. Dr. Gillies, Hist. Greece, p. 64.

bed, and adorned it with gold. Women of the highest rank drew water from the well. The princess Nausicaa washed the family clothes, and the princes her brothers, on her return from the river, unyoked the car, and carried in the clothes. But the female sex, though chiefly occupied with domestic employments, particularl yspinning, weaving, and needle-work, enjoyed more freedom, and mingled more in society, than has been known in these countries in subsequent ages. In the dialogues between Hector and Andromache, we have an inimiable picture of conjugal tenderness, and in the character of Penelope a model of female virtue.

CHAP. XIII.

THE revolution occasioned by the return of the Heraclidæ, which operated a change in the affairs of Greece, and gave new inhabitants to Peloponnesus, was followed by an internal revolution of every state within itself. The governments of Greece in the first ages, though of no very regular and defined constitution, were all limited monarchies. No other form of government is mentioned by Homer, or was known in his times. When the Heraclidæ took possession of their new dominions, they established every where that hereditary limited monarchy which was adapted to the ideas and temper of the age. The power and authority acquired by the monarchs of Argos before the Trojan war, was diminished by the extensive calamities which followed that expedition; and the equality established

lished among the princes descended from Hercules, gave an opposite bias to Grecian politics and government. Those vigorous principles of democracy, so congenial to the Grecian governments, began to ferment. The prerogatives of royalty, chiefly conspicuous in war, could not be supported in peace, without an extensive revenue or the exclusive right of the sword. Men who had been accustomed to share the councils of their sovereign, and to come armed to the public assembly, were not likely to submit to the tyranny of princes, whom they or their fathers had raised to power. Argos was among the first states in Greece that abolished arbitrary rule. Miltas, the fourth prince in succession to Temenus, was condemned to death for usurping absolute power. The death of the self-devoted Codrus restored liberty to Athens, which had been always tending to a democratic constitution. The example was followed by other states. Conspiring against their tyrants, the cities erected themselves into republics; the name of king grew odious; and popular governments were every where established. From this period the love of liberty became the prevailing passion of the Greeks; hatred to tyrants was a bond of union; and sometimes a people rose in arms to break the chains of a neighbouring nation. In this manner the republic of Achaia commenced, which was formed of several confederated cities, each governed by their own magistrates and laws. Corinth, though early abounding in wealth and luxury, was the last city of Greece that assumed a republican form; monarchy was then abolished in every province within the Grecian territories, from the southern extremity of Peloponnesus to the northern frontier of Thessaly *. The first emigrations,

* Thucyd. lib. i. Arist. Polit. lib. iv. cap. 13.

also,

also, to foreign countries, made during the period when kingly government became odious, carried along with them the love of liberty, and established popular governments in the new settlements.

After these convulsions had spent their force, Greece began to gather strength and advance in population. The territory not sufficing the inhabitants, a ready resource offered to the various states, of extending their dominions, and at the same time preserving their force, by forming colonies. To this they were invited by the flourishing state of the people, who, on former occasions, had emigrated from their own country. Various causes contributed to the colonizing spirit of the Greeks.

When wandering tribes begin to settle, they change not their character, nor fix their condition all at once. The spirit of the former period passes into the following; the restless and roaming state still continues; the inhabitants are feebly attached to the cantons which they occupy; agriculture and the arts increase slowly. As all abodes are in some measure alike, they are ready, on every occasion, to leave their seats and seek new habitations. Hence the times of barbarity were of long continuance; various emigrations took place; and Greece continually poured itself into the adjacent countries. In a narrow and uncultivated region, containing a number of independent tribes, straitened for territory and subsistence, other causes would induce the inhabitants to emigrate. As no provision was made for the natural increase of population, a warlike nation, little acquainted with agriculture, and less with manufactures, had no other method of discharging their superfluous numbers, but by forming a colony.

Another fertile source of the colonization of Greece

Greece was that spirit of faction which possesses all republics. When states were burthened with subjects, from whose ambition or idleness they dreaded innovation, they projected a colony to relieve them from their apprehensions. When a factious demagogue became formidable to the constitution of his country, he was sent, at the head of his followers, to some distant region, over which he might preside.

But the object of Grecian colonization was not only to discharge the supernumerary members, and preserve the constitution of the parent state, but also to form establishments which might prove advantageous. Hence it became a principal object of policy. With this view they determined the respective rights of the metropolis and its colonies; established by law what they owed to one another; and to render the preliminaries more sacred, accompanied them with sacrifices and religious ceremonies. The mother country furnished the colonies with arms, and every thing necessary for their establishment; gave them generals and magistrates; and engaged to continue their protection. Such favours constitute rights. In consequence of these the colonies came under the obligation to assist the metropolis with their forces, to open their ports to their fleets, and break all other alliances in their behalf.

The foreign countries in which the Greeks planted their principal colonies were the south-east coast of Italy, extending from Brundisium to the frith of Sicily, from the frith to the promontory of Pachynum, and a great part of the coast of the Lesser Asia, lying along the eastern shore of the Archipelago. They had besides many settlements on the shores of Thrace, in the islands of the Ionian sea, on

on the borders of the Euxine, and as far as the coast of Africa.

These colonies remained attached to the mother country, while they felt the want of protection: but the utility derived from colonies can only be temporary. These new republics, when once established, have interests conformable to their situation, and of consequence soon forget their connection with the mother country: nothing but a common interest can long unite in the bonds of amity separate and divided states.

From these events two remarkable effects followed. The idea of extending their dominions by conquering their neighbours, never presented itself to the cities of Greece. As all of them were equal, or nearly in a state of equality, none were sufficiently ambitious to attempt such an enterprise. The soil opposed obstacles to conquest; the mountains rose as boundaries between one state and another; and if these natural barriers were broke through, it would be difficult to make solid and permanent establishments. The plan of colonizing being introduced, continued to increase, as the different states found their power augmented in proportion to the number of their colonies. They placed their glory in giving birth to new cities; to colonize became an object of ambition; and this spirit removed the idea of subjecting the neighbouring people to their arms. Hence the Grecian states present us with the singular spectacle of nations shut up within their own boundaries, without even the desire of increasing their territories, or extending their domains.

From this era begins that variety and opposition of character, which ever afterward prevailed among the different people comprehended under the general name of Greeks. Previous to this period, in the

the barbarous state of Greece, a remarkable resemblance appeared among all the Hellenic tribes. About this time the different republics completed their forms of government; and in consequence of this event, their primitive mode of thinking and acting changed. Every state opened its eyes to its own interests, and formed laws and maxims relative to its position and particular views. A general attention was roused to the great objects of government; and from this period the republics of Greece engaged in action, and, sharpened by rivalship, become more worthy of our contemplation.

The government of all the Grecian states was originally monarchical. The unsuccessful attempts of the princes of the line of Hercules to extend their power, awakened the jealousy of the people, and strengthened their natual bias to republican government. About the same time the spirit of liberty pervaded all the communities of Greece. Hence the early monarchies were of short duration. Kings as well as usurpers were branded with the odious name of Tyrants. Revolutions sometimes took place from democracy to monarchy; but these were temporary and transient. The people, when left to the free operation of their natural sentiments, returned with keenness and tumult to the antient constitution.

The history of all the Grecian republics is not equally interesting to modern times. Sparta and Athens distinguished themselves above the rest as the leading commonwealths of Greece. These were the great springs of the political machine; and by the ascendant which alternately they acquired, they directed the motions and decided the destiny of this extraordinary people.

The Spartan government hath always appeared a paradox in the political world. The division of power, the state of manners, the customs, the laws,

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and the mode of life, are so singular and extraordinary, that some authors have doubted the existence, and all expressed their admiration of this political phenomenon. But from the researches that we have made, and the facts that we have investigated, the constitution of Sparta will appear, like every other constitution, the result of a situation, and the production of the times.

The change of monarchy to popular government, and the tendency to form colonies, at the period which we are now contemplating, gave rise to the study of legislation. This fermentation in the human mind opened a new career to ambition and to wisdom. Morals and politics became the study of the noblest spirits; and the change of situation induced the people to demand laws; and simple citizens began to exercise an authority which they owed to their talents and their virtues.

No legislator, however, enacts the laws, or forms the manners of a people, according to his own mind. The genius of the times is always too strong for the spirit of the lawgiver. Men are ever the same; tenacious of their rights, and jealous of their independence. If, when authority is best established, a monarch cannot model a system of government for his subjects according to his own fancy, nor even pass a single law contrary to the consent of the people, the chief of an inferior tribe, clad in the same garb, and covered with the same shed as his fellow-citizens, could never enjoy the exercise of that power. A Lycurgus might appear, but who could create a people? What has astonished historians and philosophers, the state of manners to which the Spartan government refers, is more rude and barbarous than what Homer attributes to that nation in a former age. Various and ingenious reasons have been assigned, to account for this appearance.

ance. The historical facts that we have formerly mentioned, explain the origin and the formation of this celebrated republic.

The army of the Heraclidæ, when they came to recover the dominion of their ancestors, was composed of Dorians from Thessaly, who roamed the savage wilds of Œta, Parnassus, and Pindus, the bravest, but at the same time the most barbarous of all the Greek tribes. The Acheans, the antient inhabitants of Laconia, were compelled to seek new habitations, while the barbarians of Thessaly took possession of their country. Of all the nations which are the subject of historical record, this people bore the nearest resemblance to the rude American tribes; and this furnishes the key to the Lacedemonian government.

Aristodemus, one of the descendants of Hercules, perished in the war which the Heraclidæ carried on to recover the dominions of their ancestors, and left two sons, who being twins, and so exactly similar, that it was difficult to distinguish the one from the other, succeeded jointly to the kingdom of Laconia, which fell by lot to their father. Hence the divided royalty, and the two kings at Sparta.

Such a form of government is little calculated to be lasting, to give stability to the reigning power, to ensure tranquillity to the people. Jealousy, as might be expected, arose between the princes: hence it became necessary for each to court the favour of the inferior chiefs and the people. While in other Grecian states the tyranny of one king drove the multitude to assume the supreme power to themselves, or divide it with their leaders, in Lacedemon the concessions of two kings gave, by degrees, such importance to the people, that the royal authority no longer remained an object of terror or envy. The kings were invested with great authority in war,

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in the quality of generals; they were hereditary senators, and the high priests of the nation *.

The legislative authority was in a great measure vested in the senate, which consisted of twenty-eight members, chosen at the age of sixty. The kings were the hereditary presidents of this national council. The natural ascendant of the "elders," among a barbarous people, evidently suggested the idea of this institution.

The seeming sovereignty resided in the people, as in their assemblies the election of senators was made, and the last resolutions were taken. They approved or rejected the decrees of the senate. Such was the constitution of Sparta. The kings proposed the business in the public assemblies; the senate deliberated and resolved; the people assented or refused. An American tribe, where a chief presides, where the council of the aged deliberate, and the assembly of the people gives their voice, is on the eve of such a constitution.

As the senate consisted of the antient nobility; as in council they possessed a negative before debate; as the members were chosen for life; and as, on the decease of any senator, his son or nearest kinsman was commonly substituted in his stead, they soon began to encroach on the other powers in the government, and to arrogate to themselves the whole legislative as well as executive authority. To counteract this dangerous tendency, and to curb the power of the senate, five annual magistrates, under the name of the Ephori, invested with power to inspect and controul the administration of government, were appointed in the reign of Theopompus, a hundred and thirty years after the death of the Spartan lawgiver*. These magistrates were chosen

* Aristot. Polit. lib. ii. cap. 14.

by

by the popular assembly out of their own number, and bore a great resemblance to the tribunes of the people among the Romans. Their power was great and almost unlimited. To the Ephori it belonged to convoke, prorogue, and dissolve the greater and lesser assemblies of the people; the former composed of nine thousand Spartans, inhabitants of the capital; the latter of thirty thousand Lacedemonians, inhabitants of the inferior towns and villages. They could oblige the magistrates, and even the monarchs, to give an account of their administration. They could arrest and imprison the persons both of the senators and the kings. Every month the kings and the Ephori exchanged solemn oaths; the former swearing for themselves to observe the laws of Sparta; the latter, for the people whom they represented, to maintain the hereditary honours of the royal race, to respect them as ministers of religion, and to follow them as leaders in war.

Valour is the virtue of a people in this state. Accordingly the martial spirit of the Spartans was high and respectable; and the science of war was their chief study. Abandoning the culture of the land to slaves, Sparta was a camp where the citizens exercised the trade of arms, and trained up soldiers for their country.

People in this description, too, are distinguished by the love of their country. Affection to the tribe is strong among savages. A small community resembles a cluster of friends; and, surrounded by common enemies, their attachment to one another has the force of party spirit. Hence, when the Dorians settled in Laconia, patriotism became their passion, private affections were absorbed in the public, and nature itself gave way to Sparta.

The observance of the laws, which distinguished this people, was not a compliance with the orders of individuals,

individuals, but a respect for established customs, and a regard for their country. At Sparta the manners governed.

The Dorians, when they followed the standard of the Heraclidæ, agreed to the following conditions: that the royalty should remain with the descendants of Hercules; but that the lands should be divided among all those who drew the sword. Hence the territory of Laconia was given to the Dorians, and parcelled out into thirty-nine thousand shares. Thirty thousand were assigned for the inhabitants of the country, and nine thousand allotted to the inhabitants of the city. Each share contained as much ground as was judged sufficient for the subsistence of a family, and produced eighty-two medimni or bushels of grain, with a proportional measure of fruits, wine, and oil. The kings, as in the heroic times, enjoyed their separate domains, conferred by the voluntary gratitude of their subjects. The senators, contented with an increase of power and honour, neither obtained nor desired any pre-eminence of fortune.

Gold and silver at that time were unknown in Greece. Iron money was current: hence the use of it was established at Sparta. The utility and scarcity of iron, rendered it, in early times, a very ordinary and convenient measure of exchange. As such it was frequently employed in the heroic times, as such it continued long in Byzantium and other Grecian cities*. There is reason, however, to believe, that the use of iron money, which continued permanent in Sparta alone, after the vices that accompany wealth and luxury had corrupted the rest of Greece, necessarily repelled from the republic of Lycurgus the votaries of pleasure, the slaves of gain, and all the gaudy retinue of vanity and folly.

* Aristoph. Nub. Plut. in Lysand.

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The public tables established at Sparta, at which the citizens ate promiscuously of the same diet, remount to the heroic ages, and formed a part of the Cretan institutions. Every table contained fifteen persons, each of whom furnished a certain quantity of requisite provisions. A bushel of flour, eight gallons of wine, five pounds of cheese, two pounds and a half of figs, together with a sum of money to purchase a small portion of flesh and fish, was the monthly contribution of every member. From their entertainments all delicate and luxurious dishes were banished; their most esteemed fare being a sort of black broth.

At that time arts were in their rudest state: hence the simplicity of the Spartans in their equipage, buildings, and furniture. They knew no mechanic tools but the axe and the saw.

The use of letters was not as yet introduced or become frequent: hence the laws of Lycurgus were not committed to writing.

The masculine manners and robust exercises of the Spartan women, the severity and rigour displayed in the education of the young, the reverence for the aged, the aversion to industry and arts, the taciturnity, the laconic eloquence, we find among the tribes that wander in the woods, and live in the state of nature.

Thus Lycurgus, like every other legislator, formed his system of government from the state of society, established antient usages into laws, and gave a direction to the current of the times.

The perpetuity of manners is not the least singular part in the history of this republic. A violence was committed upon nature which ordains a progress to nations as well as to inviduals. The people were arrested in the first stage of improvement. A

bold hand was put forth to that spring which is in society, and stopt its motion.

From this account it appears that the genius of the Spartans was altogether martial. War was their chief study, the object of their education, their employment and their pleasure. Courage, the first quality of a soldier, was enlivened by honour and shame, by praise and reproach, and every powerful principle that can operate on the mind. In the knowledge and practice of war they excelled the Greeks as well as the Barbarians. Their first lesson in this art was, "never to fly from their enemies, however numerous or powerful, and on all occasions to conquer or to die." Those who fled in an engagement were rendered infamous for ever, and might be insulted by any person with impunity. War, instead of a hardship, was considered by the Spartans as a relaxation; the city was the scene of labour, study, temperance, and severe discipline; the camp that of indulgence and luxury. In the day of battle they assumed an unusual gaiety of aspect, and displayed an unwonted splendour in their dress and ornaments. Their long hair was adorned with simple elegance; their scarlet uniforms and brazen armour diffused a lustre around them. As they approached the enemy, the king offered sacrifices to the gods; the music struck up, and the soldiers advanced with a cheerful countenance and a steady pace, to what they were taught to regard as the noblest employment of man. In military enthusiasm the female sex vied with the men. The matrons delivered the shield to the husband and the son, with this parting injunction, "Bring it back as a trophy of victory, or be brought upon it as your bier." The mother who heard that her son had fallen in battle, carefully examined the body, to see whether he had received his wounds before or behind: in the first

case

case she rejoiced; in the latter she wept. The extraordinary valour of the Spartans gained them a name among nations. They were distinguished from the other Greeks at the Olympic games. Neighbouring people applied for generals to this nursery of heroes. They held the balance between the contending states, and were at the head of the Grecian affairs for five hundred years. After the institutions of Lycurgus had shared the fate of all human things, the Lacedemonians ran the career of other nations: the warlike spirit however still prevailed; and Sparta was the last city in Greece which became a village in the Roman empire.

But when we contemplate their valour and their patriotism, we view them on their most favourable side. A people possessing sovereignty are haughty, arrogant, and imperious; and when they have an advantage over others, are disposed to treat them like slaves. Sustaining no character but that of soldiers, they know only the law of arms: the utility of the republic becomes their sole rule; and hence history will represent them as cruel, perfidious, and sacrificing every thing to their interest or ambition.

The severity with which they treated their slaves; the *ambuscade*, as it is called, or their training the youth to murder in secret the unfortunate Helots, fill us with astonishment and horror.

A free intercourse among the sexes, in the rude state of society, is attended with no criminal effects. Twenty or thirty families, in an American cabin reside together in unsuspicious and unsuspected innocence: but in a more advanced period, the forms of modesty are the great guardians of chastity. As the women had acquired an ascendant at Sparta, their corruption, as has been observed by Aristotle, was one of the chief causes of the decline and ruin of that republic.

Sparta was made for perpetuity, not for aggrandizement. While other states extended their power and their dominion, the Spartans could not keep pace with the times. They had no other method, therefore, of preserving their antient influence, but by depressing their neighbours: hence that inverted ambition, which appears in the latter part of their history *.

Such were the outlines, the form, and the spirit of that singular constitution, attested by the first authors of antiquity, who beheld it both in its vigour and in its decline, and displayed on the authentic page of historical record. The life of Lycurgus, the legislator of this republic, is involved in the shade of a dark antiquity, and embellished by fiction. Plutarch, his biographer, lived near a thousand years after his hero, and what credit is due to the traditions and fables of such a remote era? To refer antient institutions and customs to celebrated names, has been too common in all ages, as it suits the spirit of admiration which is natural to mankind, and the uninquisitive indolence of authors, who choose rather to follow authorities, than to examine and enquire for themselves. The most probable parts of the story, as related by Plutarch, are, that Lycurgus was descended from the blood-royal; that he was distinguished by his wisdom and virtue; that, in a time of turbulence and anarchy, he was called upon to arrange or new-model the commonwealth; and that, from comparing the code of Cretan policy with the antient usages of the Dorians, he established those laws and institutions which, receiving the divine sanction of the Delphian oracle, subsisted at Sparta for more than seven hundred years.

* Vide Logan's Elements of the Philosophy of History.

CHAP. XIV.

Of the ATHENIAN *Government, and the Legislation of* SOLON.

AFTER the death of Codrus, Jupiter was declared sole monarch of Athens. In the place of their kings they constituted perpetual governors, under the name of Archons. The blood of Codrus was respected in his descendants, and his son Medon was elected to his charge. The power of the archons was more limited than that of the kings; together with the name, the office was changed: the sovereign authority was abridged; and the magistrates were made accountable to the people. Even this office, held for life, appeared to the restless Athenians to be too near a resemblance to royalty, the very shadow of which they were resolved to destroy. Accordingly, from a perpetual, they reduced it to a decennial administration. Wealth increasing during a long peace, a new source of power arose from this distinction, and influence in private life gave an ascendancy in the state. From the competition of many candidates, Athens was indebted for a farther step into the regions of freedom. The archonship was made annual, and the power was divided among nine, invested with various duties and authority. A power so limited was insufficient to restrain a turbulent people. This oligarchy, acting with a vague and indefinite jurisprudence, various as well as partial in its decrees, gave rise to faction and tumult. It would be difficult to determine what was the form of government at Athens till the time of Solon. At this period they had

had no written laws. The magistrates decided by usages and forms, which orginating in antient times, were not adapted to the present.

The inconvenience of an unsettled government and an uncertain jurisprudence, induced all parties to concur in the resolution to appoint a lawgiver. Draco was raised to this important office by the general voice of his countrymen. Little is known concerning this first legislator of Athens, except that his laws were remarkable for their severity, which gave occasion to Demades the orator to say, that they were not written with *ink* but with *blood*. This has been interpreted as a proof of his own austere character: it was a testimony no less strong of the turbulence of the times.

The severity of such a system defeated its own purpose. When the most trivial offences, as well as the most enormous crimes, were punished with death or banishment, few would be accusers of delinquents, and the humanity of the judges, except in the case of enormous crimes, would soften the rigours of law. The laws of Draco tended only to increase the evils which they were designed to remedy. Athens, labouring under internal disorders, aggravated by external misfortunes, had recourse to the wisdom and the virtue of Solon to reform the constitution, and new-model the commonwealth. Descended from the race of Codrus, distinguished by his genius for the fine arts, his eloquence, valour, and humanity, he was well qualified for the sublime and patriotic employment of establishing a system of government, and regulating the administration of justice, among a free but turbulent people. The combined evils of anarchy and oppression raged at Athens from the struggles and contests between the rich and the poor. The unequal division of property was the great source of discord and conten-

contention in the antient commonwealths. This was prevented at Sparta by an equal division of the lands; but produced many alterations in the constitution of Rome, and was the immediate motive for the appointment of Solon to be lawgiver of Athens. In all countries the laws have given to the lender certain rights over the person of the borrower; but at Athens, the rapacity of creditors knew no bounds. They compelled the insolvent debtors to cultivate their lands, to perform the services of slaves, and even to transfer their sons and daughters as a marketable property. Abuses, so shocking to humanity, produced a violent irritation in the minds of the people against their oppressors. Deriving courage from despair, they had taken the resolution to elect and follow some warlike leader, in order to avenge themselves on their oppressors, to establish an equal partition of lands, and to institute a new form of government*. At this critical period the character of Solon drew the attention of all parties; and, by universal consent, he was appointed archon, with power to reform the laws and constitution of Athens.

At that time the state of Attica was divided into three parties. The inhabitants of the mountains, among whom there was a more equal division of property, struggled for democratical government, the opulent possessors of the plains contended for an oligarchy; the third party, who lived on the sea-coast, having wealth unequally distributed among them, desired a mixed government. From these various claims, and the struggles of each party for their rights and for power, the institutions of Solon took their rise. Had he been appointed the absolute dictator of the constitution, he would have

* Plutarch. in Solon.

established a more perfect form of government: but the genius of the times, though it was directed, could not be controlled by the spirit of the lawgiver, and, according to his own expression, "he gave the Athenians—not the best laws, but the best they were capable of receiving."

He divided the Athenians into four classes, in proportion to their wealth. The first class consisted of those whose lands annually yielded five hundred measures of liquid as well as dry commodities; and the minimum of whose yearly income may be calculated at sixty pounds sterling, which is equivalent, if we estimate the relative value of money by the price of labour and the necessaries of life, to about six hundred pounds sterling in the present age *. In the second class were ranked such citizens, whose estates produced three hundred measures; in the third, those whose estates produced two hundred. The fourth class, and by far the most numerous, either possessed no landed property, or at least enjoyed not a revenue in land equal to twenty-four pounds sterling, or, according to the above proportion, two hundred and forty pounds of our present currency. The executive power, and all the offices of trust and dignity, were vested in the three first classes; the fourth class, though excluded from office, had the right of voting in the public assembly, and judging in the courts of justice. The importance of this privilege was overlooked at first, but in the end threw the whole power of the state into the hands of the people. There lay an appeal from all the magistrates to the public assembly; the laws, many of which were obscure, were interpreted by the popular tribunal; all affairs of state, with regard to peace and war, were determined by the people; and

* Vide Dr. Gillies' Introduct. to Lysias, and Hist. Greece.

as

as the lowest class outnumbered the other three, they possessed a preponderancy of voices on all occasions. Thus the Athenian constitution was purely democratical, and the judicative as well as legislative power was vested in the people.

However absurd or impracticable democratical government may appear to the modern kingdoms of Europe, it was by no means ill adapted to antient Greece, and particulary to Attica. Though the supreme power was nominally vested in the people, they who exclusively shared that power, scarcely amounted to a tenth part of the men of the state. The slaves, by whom all the laborious arts were exercised, were four times more numerous than the free men; and of the latter we may compute that little more than one half were entitled to any share in the sovereignty.

As a balance to the popular assembly, Solon instituted a new council, or senate, consisting of a hundred men, chosen by ballot from each of the four tribes. This council was afterwards augmented to five hundred by Clisthenes, when the number of tribes were increased to ten. The senate enjoyed the important prerogatives of convoking the popular assembly, of preparing all matters before they came to be decided by the people, to whom, according to the constitution of Solon, nothing was to be proposed that had not previously obtained the approbation of the senate. The candidates for a place in this assembly were strictly examined into by the guardians of their respective tribes, and, previous to the ballot, were to be approved of by the archons. The mode of election by ballot preserved the idea of equality so natural to a republic, prevented factious intrigue for office, and gave discontent the colour of irreligion.

From the same views of balancing the wildness and turbulence of democratic rule, Solon restored

and reformed the court of Areopagus, whose authority had been nearly abolished by the institutions of Draco. The power of this court was merely judicative; it was composed of the archons, who had discharged the duties of their office with distinguished integrity and reputation. This assembly met at night, and in the open air; those who pleaded before them, were not permitted to indulge themselves in rhetorical declamation, but were strictly confined to matters of fact and the merits of the cause. This august tribunal was highly respected all over Greece for its wisdom and integrity. The members of Areopagus were the guardians of religion and the laws, superintended the education of youth, exercised a censorial power over the lives and manners of the citizens, and in dangerous emergencies were entitled to assume a sort of dictatorial power *.

Such was the outline of the constitution established by Solon, which was held in veneration by all antiquity. A particular detail of his laws transcends the boundaries of this work; it is sufficient for our purpose to mark the principles on which they are founded.

Legislation, as formerly mentioned, was a study and a science in the early period of Greece. At a meeting of the seven wise men it was debated, which was the best form of government? "That," said Solon, "is the best, in which all are taught to feel the injuries done to *each*." Accordingly, to unite all the citizens in a common interest, and inspire a fellow-feeling through the whole state, seems to have been the chief object in view throughout the legislation of Solon. The ultimate authority resided in the

* Isocrat. Orat. Areopagit.—Atheniensium rempublicam non magisposse sine Areopagi consilio, quàm mundum sine providentiâ Dei, administrari. Cicer. de Natur, Deorum.

people,

people, because the interests of the whole were concerned in the decision. Various laws were framed, more particularly to inculcate, that every man belonged to the state. The debtor's effects might be seized, but his person was sacred, for his goods were private property, but himself belonged to the republic. Idleness was punished as a crime, because the public suffers by the poverty, and gains by the industry of its members. The singular law which has excited so much surprise, was founded on this principle, "that during an insurrection or sedition, the citizen who did not espouse a side, was to be held infamous." The ardour of the Athenians, and the interest they took in all public affairs, were sufficiently powerful to dispose them to the observance of this law.

All political institutions have their advantages and defects, and as authors dwell on the one or the other, discourses on government are apt to turn into panegyric or satire. Anacharsis, the Scythian, pointed out the defect in the Athenian constitution, when he observed, "that Solon appointed wise men to deliberate on causes, and fools to decide them." The power of the people became enormous and excessive. Such a multitude as an Athenian assembly, which seldom consisted of less than six thousand persons, was certainly unqualified to deliberate with wisdom, or to decide with justice. The senate, and the court of Areopagus, intended as checks to the popular assemblies, did not remedy the evil. The Areopagus had no part in the government, and the senate, depending upon the people, could not repair a constitution which had essential defects. The senate was besides too numerous. The experience of ages has demonstrated, that all great assemblies are mobs, and that in proportion to the multitude of counsellors there is the less wisdom. Accordingly the Athenian

state was tormented with faction and torn with dissensions. In the latter periods of the republic, the city was in incessant combustion, the assemblies tumultuous, and the people abandoned to the impetuosity of every bold haranguer.

Humanity, generosity, and greatness of soul, formed the character of the Athenians. Examples appear in every page of their history. But the people will always retain their character; fickle, capricious, unjust, and hurried away by the first impressions. A popular government is generally tyrannical. The Athenian despot, in many respects, resembles the Persian. The humours of a people, flattered and seduced by their orators, as Plato has observed, are equally dangerous and terrible, as the caprices of a prince, corrupted by the homage and adulation of his courtiers.

In all the Grecian republics every freeman was bound to military service: the abundance of slaves rendered this both practicable and necessary. The labour of the slaves supported the free citizens; and the practice of arms became necessary to the latter, to hold their ascendant over the former, as well as to preserve the military spirit of the republic. At the age of eighteen every free Athenian was enrolled in the army. His duty, for the first two years, was confined within the bounds of Attica. At the age of twenty, the youth of all ranks took an oath, in the temple of Minerva, to obey the laws and promote the prosperity of their country; to follow the military standard to every part of the world, when summoned by their commanders; to fight to the last for their native country; and to regard wheat, barley, vines, and olives, as the only boundary of Attica.

It has been already observed, that Athens at this time was divided into three parties, the inhabitants of the mountains, those of the plains, and those on the

the sea-coast. Soon after the departure of Solon (who had bound the people by oath to make no innovation in the commonwealth for ten years), these parties, under their leaders, Pisistratus, Megacles, and Lycurgus, began to re-appear. Megacles, the chief of the Alcmæonidæ, was powerful by his wealth, his alliance by marriage to Clisthenes, tyrant of Sicyon, and by the renown which he had acquired in the Olympian, Pythian, and Isthmian games. Pisistratus was descended of an antient family, that traced their pedigree to Codrus, the last of the Athenian kings. To extraordinary abilities and a lofty spirit, Pisistratus added engaging manners and an insinuating address: and he had displayed his valour and conduct in several military enterprises. To effectuate his ambitious designs, he employed a singular stratagem, or dexterously availed himself of a real incident. Wounded in several parts of the body, he drove his chariot into the market-place, and shewing himself all covered with blood, he implored the protection of the people from his enemies, by whom, according to his own representation, he had been attacked as he was going into the country. Moved by his appearance and his story, the people appointed him a guard of fifty men for the security of his person. With the assistance of these he made himself master of the citadel, and his opponents were forced to submission, or retired to banishment. Henceforth he is distinguished by the historians as the Tyrant of Athens; a term employed by the Greeks to denote the citizen of a republic who had acquired sovereignty over his fellow-citizens.

Pisistratus made no changes in the constitution of Solon. Gentle in the exercise of sovereignty, he maintained the regular course of law and justice, not only by his authority, but by his example. When he heard that he was accused in the Areopagus, he

appeared in person to answer the accusation. The reputation of his wisdom added his name to the sages of Greece. He was the first that instituted a public library; he introduced the Iliad of Homer to the knowledge of his countrymen; adorned the city with fine edifices and temples, and polished the manners of the Athenians. "Take away only his ambition," said Solon, "and he is the best citizen of Athens."

From comparing the antient historians, it is probable that his sons shared the kingdom between them, though Hipparchus, as the elder, enjoyed the chief authority. His character is transmitted to us by Plato as one of the most perfect in history, and the period of his administration is compared to the golden age. He was a patron of learning and learned men. He introduced the poems of Homer more generally to the knowledge of his countrymen, by commanding them to be sung at the Panathenean festival. He kept the poet Simonides in his court, and sent a galley to bring Anacreon to Athens. To dispel the ignorance and barbarity of an age, when books and literature were confined to a few, he erected marble pillars, engraved with moral verses, in the city and in the country. The progress of art displayed itself in the rising temples of Athens, and the first fruits of Attic genius and taste began to appear. The public revenues were at the same time improved, and the administration of the commonwealth happily conducted at home and abroad. According to the remarkable expression of Thucydides, "the tyrants Hippias and Hipparchus singularly cultivated wisdom and virtue."

Historians, who lived nearest the period of these events, differ concerning the causes and the circumstances of the conspiracy against Hipparchus: but all agree that it was private revenge, and not any political

political motive, that armed the hands of Harmodius and Aristogiton against the life of the tyrants. Their hostile intention seems only to have been imparted to a chosen number of their friends. They fixed the day of execution on the feast of Panathenea, when all the citizens wore arms. The suspicion of being betrayed saved Hippias from their rage, but Hipparchus was assassinated. Harmodius also was killed on the spot; Aristogiton was punished by the multitude *.

From this time tyranny began at Athens. Resentment, uncertainty, suspicion, led Hippias to severities. From that moment he became stern and sanguinary. Many Athenians were put to death. Necessity produced a change in his conduct; distrusting the affections of his countrymen, he sought other supports of his power, and became odious to the people.

The party of the Alcmæonidæ, banished by Pisistratus, were not idle in their exile. With the view of expelling Hippias, and recovering Athens, they employed every means of preserving and extending their influence among the Grecian states. The temple of Delphi was burned to the ground. The Alcmæonidæ undertook to rebuild it at the desire of the Amphictyons. As they possessed great wealth, they exceeded their contract in the magnificence of the execution, and in particular faced the frontispiece with Parian marble instead of stone. By these means the Amphictyons were gained to their side, and the divinity of the place engaged in their protection. The priestess of Delphi, whenever the Lacedemonians came to consult the oracle, concluded her answer, by enjoining them "to deliver Athens from the tyranny of the Pisistratidæ." This stratagem

* Thucyd. lib. vi. cap. 57.

had the desired effect. The Lacedemonians, though bound to the family of Pisistratus by the sacred ties of hospitality, determined to invade Attica. After one unsuccessful attempt, they sent a larger army into the Athenian territories, under their king Cleomenes. Joined by the Alcmæonid party, and increased by numbers whom the severities of Hippias had irritated, they laid siege to Athens. Hippias, unwilling to expose his children to the consequences of a siege, sent them secretly out of the city. They fell into the enemy's hands; unable to save their lives by any other means, Hippias agreed to resign his sovereignty, and retire into exile. The Athenians having recovered their liberty, decreed extraordinary honours to the memory of the Tyrannicides. The celebration of their achievement by songs, made a part of the religious ceremonies at the great festival of Panathenea. The custom was introduced even at private entertainments, always to sing the song of Harmodius and Aristogiton. Statues of the patriots, made by the greatest artists at the public expence, and of the most costly materials, were erected in different places of greatest resort in the city. It was forbidden, by a particular law, to give their name to slaves. Obsequies were periodically performed to their memory, under the direction of the Polemarch archon. Particular honours, privileges, and emoluments, were decreed to their families; and, in terror to all invaders of public liberty in time to come, promises were held out by authority, that future sufferers in the cause of freedom should be equally honoured with Harmodius and Aristogiton *.

The calm which Athens enjoyed was of short duration. Clisthenes, the son of Megacles, was now

* Meurtius, Pisistrat.

at the head of the Alcmæonidæ, and of course the first person in the commonwealth. But his genius was unequal to the government of a turbulent democracy. The principal Athenians attached themselves to Isagoras, who became the head of a new faction. The wealth of Clisthenes procured him the support of the lower ranks. By their influence in the public assembly, he made several alterations in the form of government favourable to his own views, and increased the number of tribes to ten, to which he gave new names. To oppose his power, which now equalled that of Pisistratus, Isagoras applied to Lacedemon, which at that time held the ascendant in Greece. Cleomenes, who possessed greater influence in the government than is usual to Spartan kings, immediately adopted the interests of Isagoras, and sending a herald to Athens, pronounced banishment on Clisthenes, and the chiefs of his party. Such was the formidable name of Sparta, that Clisthenes immediately obeyed the decree. The Spartans, who seized every occasion of extending the authority or the influence of their state, thought this a favourable season for changing the Athenian constitution into the form of an aristocracy. Cleomenes marched to Athens with a small army. At once he banished seven hundred families, and was proceeding to dissolve the council of five hundred, and to vest the power of the commonwealth in a new council of three hundred, all partisans of Isagoras; but the senate refused to submit, and the people ran to arms. Cleomenes and Isagoras were besieged in the citadel, where they had taken refuge, and surrendered on condition that the Lacedemonians might depart in safety. Isagoras accompanied them, but many Athenians of his party were put to death. Clisthenes

and

and the exiled families immediately returned. Such at that time were the rapid revolutions of Athens*.

The party who now assumed the government of Athens, apprehending the consequences of a quarrel with Lacedemon, and destitue of allies in Greece, from the formidable power of Sparta, sent ambassadors to Sardis, to form an alliance with Artaphernes, the Persian satrap. This was the first intercourse between the vast empire of Persia, and the European Greeks. The satrap received the deputies of a little unknown republic with the insolence of the lords of the East. Having enquired who they were, and from what part of the world they came; and being informed—from Greece; he briefly replied, "That if they would acknowledge subjection to the Persians, by giving earth and water to king Darius, they might be received into alliance, otherwise they must depart." Such was the critical situation of their country, that the ambassadors consented to these humiliating terms.

The restless temper of Cleomenes brooded over his late disappointment and disgrace at Athens. On his return to Sparta, he endeavoured to excite a new confederacy against the Athenian government. He discovered to the Spartan senate the collusion of the Delphian priests with the Alcmæonidæ in regard to the pretended responses of the oracle; and represented the injustice as well as imprudence of their conduct in expelling Hippias, whom they were bound to protect and defend, by the laws of hospitality, and the interest of their country. The Spartan government, jealous of the growing power of the Athenians since they had recovered their liberty, consented that Hippias should be invited into

* Herodot. lib. v. cap. 72. Thucyd. lib. i. cap. 126.

Pelo-

Peloponnesus, and wished to restore him to the throne of his father. With this view they summoned to a congress all their allies in Peloponnesus. The deputies of the several states, having assembled in the Spartan forum, Cleomenes explained the intentions of the republic. His eloquence produced not the intended effect. The Peloponnesians, however jealous of the Athenian greatness, were still more jealous of the power of tyrants; and many of them, who had experienced the haughtiness of Sparta, were not dissatisfied with beholding a rival to that republic in the northern division of Greece. The other deputies expressed their dissent by silent disapprobation; but Sosicles, the Corinthian, condemned the measure with such force of argument and fervour of eloquence, that Cleomenes desisted from the design.

Hippias finding his cause universally abandoned by the Greeks, sought the protection of Artaphernes, the Persian governor of Sardis. As Athens had set the example of soliciting the Persian protection, it is not surprizing that the dethroned prince should have followed the example. Hippias found the attention and respect which his rank and character might seem to deserve. The Athenians, informed of his favourable reception at the court of the satrap, sent ambassadors to Sardis to counteract the intrigues of their banished prince; but Artaphernes had taken his resolution, and gave for his final answer to the ambassadors, "That if they consulted their safety, and would avoid the resentment of Persia, they must receive Hippias into their city." At the return of the ambassadors, universal indignation, not without alarm, prevailed in Athens: but the assembly finally resolved to resist all the power of the Persian empire, rather than admit within their walls the avowed enemy of their liberties.

At

At this critical juncture Aristagoras arrived at Athens, explained the revolt of the Asiatic Greeks from the government of Artaphernes, and solicited the Athenians to assist the Ionian confederacy, and defend their own colonies against the oppression of the common foe. The Ionians, a Grecian colony, inhabited the sea-coast of Asia Minor, and had long been tributary to the Persian empire. In a contest of factions at Naxos, one of the Cyclades islands, the democratical party prevailing, the principal citizens were expelled, who, taking refuge at Miletus, implored the assistance of Aristagoras, the Persian governor of that city, to restore them to their native country *. From this, Aristagoras conceived the design of reducing Naxos, and the neighbouring islands, under the Persian power. Artaphernes, governor of Sardis, and brother to Darius, approved of the plan, and joined in command with Aristagoras, Megabetes, a noble Persian, and his kinsman. The inhabitants of Naxos made a formidable resistance; the commanders quarrelled; the enterprise was abandoned; and Megabetes, attributing the bad success of this expedition to the conduct of his rival, had it in his power to ruin him with Artaphernes. In this critical situation, Aristagoras believing his destruction or disgrace inevitable, meditated a revolt; when a messenger unexpectedly arrived from his uncle Histiæus †, exhorting him to that measure. Nothing more was wanting to confirm the wavering resolution of Aristagoras. Having sounded the principal Milesians, he proposed the restoration of republican government, and immediately resigned the supreme command. The standard of freedom was

* Herodot. lib. v. cap. 28.

† An honourable exile at Susa.

soon

soon surrounded by the flower of the Ionian youth; by whose assistance, traversing the whole coast, he proclaimed liberty and independence to all who were worthy to acquire them.

Engaged in such a hazardous enterprise, he left nothing unattempted which might contribute to its success. He undertook an embassy to Greece, with the hope of gaining the parent states to the cause of the colonies. He began his negociations at Sparta, and represented to Cleomenes what a noble occasion now presented itself to the Spartans, of employing their valour in procuring liberty to their countrymen the Ionians. Cleomenes hesitated. Aristagoras having explained the distance of the journey, was ordered to depart before the setting of the sun.

Ungenerously dismissed from Sparta, Aristagoras went to Athens, the mother-country of the Ionians. The Athenians, as a maritime state, had always maintained a closer connection than the Spartans with their distant colonies; and he arrived at that critical period, when the people, full of indignation against the Persians for having recently summoned them to restore Hippias to the royal dignity, were moved from affection, as well as resentment, to listen to his request. They voted twenty ships to assist the Ionians, and this circumstance, to use the expression of a respectable historian *, "gave fire to those wars, which was never thoroughly quenched but in the ruin of the great Persian monarchy."

The administration of Artaphernes appear to have been negligent and feeble. The Athenian ships arrived at Miletus, with five added by the Eretrians. The combined fleets sailed to Ephesus, and the land-forces debarking, marched directly to

* Sir Walter Raleigh.

Sardis,

Sardis, the capital of the antient kingdom of Lydia. In the first tumult, an Ionian soldier set fire to a house; as most of the houses were walled or covered with reed, the flames spread rapidly, and the city was laid in ashes.

When Darius was informed of the burning of Sardis, and that the Athenians had assisted the Ionians in their rebellion, he shot an arrow into the air, praying that Heaven might assist him in punishing the insolence of that republic; and commanded one of his attendants to repeat in his hearing, every day, when he sat down to table, "Remember the Athenians *."

In the sixth year from the revolt of Aristagoras, the city of Miletus, the centre of the Ionian confederacy, was besieged and taken by Artaphernes, the Persian general; all the other cities, both on the sea-coast and in the islands, soon returned to their duty; and the Asiatic Greeks, first conquered by the Lydians, now submitted for the second time to the Persian power.

But the resentment of Darius was not gratified; ambition and vengeance equally prompted him to undertake the conquest of Greece. With this view he sent heralds through the Grecian dominions to demand earth and water, as symbols of submission and dependence. Dreading the formidable power of the Persians, many towns on the continent, and most of the islands, obeyed.

But the Athenians and Spartans rejected the demand with indignation; and, from the boldness of character natural to republicans, they threw one of the heralds into a well, and another into a deep ditch; telling them to take from thence as much

* Herodot. lib. v. cap. 105.

earth

earth and water as they chose*. More provoked with these insults, Darius accelerated his long-intended project of vengeance upon Greece.

Seldom does a greater, or more interesting spectacle occur in the annals of history, than the Asiatic expedition into Europe, and the war between the Greeks and the Persians. The former conflicts, in which the Grecian states had been engaged, were confined to their own frontiers, and extended not their consequences beyond the countries in which they arose. But this memorable war reached the extremities, and shook the centre of Greece. It recoiled with more destructive violence on Persia; its duration comprehends an illustrious period in the history of both countries; and its extent embraces all the great nations of antiquity, together with the scattered communities of Grecian extraction in every part of the world. Nor did the event of this enterprise interest these nations alone; the fate of future ages was involved in the contest. The important question was brought to the decision of the sword, whether Asia or Europe was to give the law to the world; whether the page of history, and the progress of civilization among the nations, were to proceed from the dominions of despotism, or the regions of freedom and science. Previous to a detail of the events in this war, it is requisite to take a view of the situation, character, and force of the contending nations.

The Persian empire was at this time more extensive than it had been under Cyrus the Great. Beside the immense provinces of the Greater Asia, the vast continent of the Lower Asia submitted to the sceptre of Darius; the antient kingdom of Lydia was subdued; Arabia was tributary; Thrace and Macedonia bended to the yoke; and Egypt was a province in the

* Herodot. lib. vii. cap. 133.

empire of the great king. The power of these extensive provinces was absolute and supreme; the millions of Asia were ever ready to march at his command; and the wealth of antient kingdoms that had been conquered, were laid up in the treasury. The revenue of the empire under Darius amounted to fourteen thousand five hundred and sixty Eubœic talents; a sum which, considering the value of money in antient times, exceeded thirty millions at present. Besides this stated income, Darius might, on any extraordinary occasion, demand the money and services of his subjects. His predecessors were satisfied with voluntary contributions and a militia. This prince established taxes and a standing army. The number of his troops equalled the resources of his treasury; and both corresponded to the extent of his dominions, which comprehended the greatest and most populous nations of the earth.

Greece, in its utmost extent, comprehended only three hundred and eighty miles in length, and three hundred and ten in breadth. Sparta and Athens were the cities that stood foremost on this occasion, and bore the chief burthen of the war. Laconia stretched a hundred miles in length, and fifty in breadth. The freemen amounted to thirty-nine thousand. The country was fertile; but the laws of Lycurgus prevented them from the acquisition of wealth. This circumstance, however, like the vow of poverty among the religious orders in the church of Rome, suggested and nourished an unbounded ambition. From the conquest of Messene to the close of the Persian wars, they had been at the head of Grecian affairs. Long allied with Corinth, the richest republic of Greece, and, as the more powerful state, taking the lead in the confederacy, they commanded Peloponnesus, and watched every opportunity to increase their influence and extend their power.

power. Whenever the Grecian states were engaged in wars with one another, or in dissensions within themselves, the Lacedemonians interfered as mediators, and held the balance between contending parties. It was the character of the Spartan government to be cautious in enterprise, but unshaken in principle; firm in resolution, and immoveable by danger. Independence on any foreign state was one great object of its singular institutions; and a people who aspired to dominion over others, never bowed to a superior power. Notwithstanding the late hostility of Sparta to Athens, circumstances concurred at this time to conciliate their cordiality, and promote their union. The antient animosity between Lacedemon and Argos had been revived and heightened by recent transactions. Cleomenes, king of Sparta, having invaded Argolis, massacred a large body of Argians who had surrendered themselves on promises of safety. Thebes, formerly the principal ally of Sparta beyond Peloponnesus, had been led by its prevailing faction to submit to the demands of Persia. These circumstances determined Sparta to a cordial union with Athens, in defending the liberties of Greece against all the force of the Persian empire.

The Athenians had been lately emancipated from the tyranny of the Pisistratidæ. On the re-establishment of popular government, an enthusiasm for liberty was kindled, and they became a great people. When under the controul of their kings, says Herodotus, the Athenians were of little account in Greece; but immediately on the subversion of the tyranny they rose to distinction, and became more illustrious than that people which had hitherto held them in such little estimation. Hence, after the expulsion of Hippias, the Athenians seem rather inspired than taught, and raised to instantaneous rather than progressive

gressive elevation. The outset of free governments is ever marked with peculiar force and vigour. As the limbs newly unshackled, so the mind, liberated from the dominion of tyranny, springs with elasticity and ardour to every object of pursuit; the people regard their new compact with a sacred reverence, and the flame of patriotism catches and pervades the whole community. In the first years of their freedom, the Athenians acquired an ascendant in Greece, which was fatal to their enemies, and at last dangerous to themselves. They chastised the insolence of the islanders of Eubœa and Egina, who contended with them in naval power; and humbled the pride of Thebes, which had rivalled them in military glory. When the Persian monarch meditated the destruction of Greece, the Athenians saw and prepared for the impending storm. A small corner of Europe opposed itself to the whole force of Asia. What could the thousands of Greece perform against the millions of Persia? They could die; and with such a spirit perhaps might gain the victory.

The experience of ages demonstrates, that kingdoms are not powerful beyond a certain extent of territory. The enormous and unweildy dimensions of an overgrown empire, form not strength, but extended weakness. Nature hath prescribed limits to the ambition of nations as well as of individuals. The kingdom of Parthia, circumscribed within moderate bounds, was more powerful than any of the Eastern empires. Unless a communication is kept up between the capital, or seat of government, and the frontier provinces, authority cannot be maintained. In the time of foreign war, too, the subjected kingdoms are apt to revolt, and the distant provinces to rebel. No bond can connect such discontiguous parts; no spirit can animate such discordant bodies. From these general, rather than

any particular causes, the empires of the East have generally fallen with the same facility with which they arose.

When Darius meditated the conquest of Greece, the Persians were no longer the same people who had fought and conquered under Cyrus the Great. They had assumed the manners and imitated the vices of the nations whom they subdued. The name of a conquering nation only remained with them: and the Persian armies were in effect composed of Medes, Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians; mercenary and corrupted bodies of men, who had no glory to gain, and no character to lose.

Greece, forever in a ferment, and torn with faction in the time of peace, joined in the closest union against a common enemy. In the common cause of liberty, rival states forgot their animosities; they deliberated with unanimity, and acted with vigour. While the one nation was in its decline, the other was advancing to maturity.

In an empire formed like Persia from the ruin of provinces, the people, subjected by fear and ruled with oppression, contract a habit of slavery. Accustomed to vexations, they learn to suffer them like necessary evils. They have no interest in common with their lord; they have no attachment to country, and never feel the spirit of freemen: without ambition or emulation they are dead members of a vast and ill-organized body. We cannot be surprized then to find generals without conduct, and armies without courage or discipline. Virtues and talents were neither sought nor regarded; merit was kept at a distance from the throne. Intrigue disposed of places; and the art of amusing or pleasing was the title to royal favour. The rank of a general was often bestowed to remove a courtier who was formidable to his rivals.

The

The institutions of Lycurgus and Solon were then in their vigour at Sparta and Athens. The cities under the protection of law, enjoyed their liberty and their property. To the courage, which they derived from nature, and the force of institution, the Greeks added a knowledge of the military art. Their warlike achievements had not been so brilliant as in after-periods; but they had been more instructive than the splendid victories of the Medes and the Persians. In republics of small extent, and frequently engaged in war with each other, military merit becomes the chief object of study, and leads to consequence and renown. Their daily practice in the gymnastic had given them agility of limbs, and an unusual degree of vigour both to mind and body; their frequent exercise in the field of battle had inured them to hardship, fatigue, and the restraints of discipline; and an acknowledged pre-eminence among their neighbours had inspired them with a martial enthusiasm, which was doubly animated in defence of their freedom and their country. Merit alone raised to employments in the state. The talent of commanding was the sole title to command. Athens proscribed great men because they were dangerous to her constitution, but she respected them still. Her fear compelled her to banish them; but her esteem re-produced them. When she excluded one hero from her walls, she opened her gates to another.

Such were the different situations of Persia and of Greece. Numbers, wealth, and extent of dominion, on the one side; disciplined valour, the love of country, and persevering spirit, on the other.

In the second spring after the reduction of Miletus, Mardonius, a Persian nobleman of the first rank, and son-in-law to Darius, was sent with a powerful fleet, and a numerous army, to take vengeance on Eretria and

and Athens for the burning of Sardis. The youthful ambition of Mardonius prompted him to extraordinary things. Arriving in Ionia, he deposed all the tyrants, and established democratical government in every Grecian city. Collecting from the Ionians and Æolians a considerable addition to his forces both by sea and land, he proceeded to the Hellespont, and passed into Europe. All, as far as Macedonia, was already subject to Persia; and that kingdom, which had formerly bought its peace by the humiliating ceremony of delivering earth and water, was now compelled to pay tribute. But having steered southward from Thasus, the whole armament was overtaken and almost destroyed by a violent storm, while attempting to double the promontory of Mount Athos: three hundred vessels were dashed against the rocks, twenty thousand men perished in the waves *. His army also, in passing through Thrace, was attacked in the camp during the night, and Mardonius himself wounded. These disasters totally defeated the design of the expedition; and Mardonius having recovered the shattered remains of the fleet and army, returned to the court of Persia, where, by flattering the pride, he averted the resentment of Darius.

He was recalled however from the command of Lesser Asia, and two generals were appointed in his room: Artaphernes, son of the late satrap of that name, and Datis a Median nobleman, more distinguished by his age and experience. These generals, leading a land-force from the interior provinces, met the fleet on the coast of Cilicia. This armament the Persian generals were ordered to employ in extending their conquests on the side of Europe, and particularly in chastising the insolence of the Eretrians and

* Herodot. lib. vi. cap. 44.

Athenians, the only nations which had conspired with the revolt of the Ionians, and assisted in the destruction of Sardis. Having subdued Naxos, and the neighbouring islands in the Egean, the storm now approached Eretria. During six days the Persian assaults were vigorously opposed. On the seventh the place was betrayed by two of the principal citizens. The temples were plundered and burnt; and the inhabitants condemned to slavery.

The Persian army now crossed into Attica, having Hippias, the banished king of Athens, for their counsellor and conductor.

Having encamped at Marathon, they sent to inform Athens of the punishment inflicted on the Eretrians.

In this alarming situation of Greece, no measures had been concerted for general security. The Asian Greeks had been first subdued. The Persian dominion then extended itself into Europe, as far as the confines of Thessaly. All the islands had now fallen. The Persian army passed the narrow channel which separated them; and still no confederacy for common defence seems to have been proposed. After the taking of Eretria, the Athenians applied for assistance to the Lacedemonians, who granted them two thousand men; but antient superstition, which prevailed at Sparta, prevented these forces from beginning to march till after the full-moon, by which means they did not arrive at Athens till four days after the battle of Marathon. The terror of the Persian name restrained the other states from furnishing the expected aid. Platea alone sent a thousand men to join the Athenian army. In this extremity the Athenians assembled all their forces, and armed even their slaves.

Fortunately at this time there was in Athens a man qualified, both by genius and experience, to take

take the lead on such a momentous occasion; Miltiades, the expelled chief of Chersonesus. When the ten generals who commanded the army, each in his turn for a day, deliberated whether they should venture to meet the enemy in the field, or prepare for a siege; and the opinions being equally divided, the Polemarch archon, according to antient custom, was called to give the casting vote. The speech of Miltiades on that occasion, recorded by Herodotus *, explains the politics and temper of the times, and accounts for the conduct of that able commander, who, contrary to the common principles of defensive war, was for risking at once a decisive engagement with an enemy so superior in numbers. "It depends on you," said Miltiades to the Polemarch Callimachus, "either to reduce Athens to slavery, or, by establishing her freedom, to leave an eternal memory of yourself among men, more glorious than even Harmodius and Aristogiton have acquired; for never, since the Athenians were a people, have they been menaced with danger like the present. If, yielding to the Persians, they are delivered into the power of Hippias, let imagination figure what their calamities will be; but if they conquer, Athens will become the first city of Greece. Should they then, by your decision, be debarred from presently engaging the enemy, I well know that faction will divide the minds of our citizens, and a party among them will not scruple to make terms with the Persians to the destruction of the rest: but if we engage before any corrupt disposition prevails, the gods only dispensing equal favour, we are able to conquer."

The Persians had, for a century past, been accustomed to almost uninterrupted success. They had often engaged and defeated the Greeks of Asia and

* Lib. vi. cap. 109.

of Cyprus. The army, under Datis and Artaphernes, advanced therefore towards Athens with confidence of success, and hopes of victory. Herodotus does not mention their numbers. According to Cornelius Nepos they amounted to a hundred thousand foot, and ten thousand horse. Neither are the numbers of the Athenian army mentioned by Herodotus, the historian who lived nearest the time of these events. It is probable that they amounted to twenty thousand free men, and an equal number of armed slaves *.

But it was to the genius of Miltiades, more than to her own strength, that Athens was indebted for her preservation. In critical emergencies men are arranged according to their abilities; and conspicuous merit is elevated to the highest station. Aristides, one of the ten generals, resigned his day of command to the approved valour and experience of Miltiades; the rest followed the illustrious example, and sacrificed the dictates of private ambition to the interest and glory of their country. The extreme inconveniences attending a divided authority were thus obviated; and the commander-in-chief enjoyed an opportunity of exerting all his efforts in the service of the state. Miltiades to his other advantages joined that of having served with the Persians. He was therefore well acquainted with the arrangement of their armies, the temper of their troops, the ordinary system of their generals, and he knew how to profit by his knowledge. The Greeks, whose chief strength consisted in their heavy-armed foot, usually began an engagement with a few discharges of missile weapons, and then presently came to close fight with their long spears. The Persians made more use of the bow, and less of the spear; and depended much

* Vide the learned and ingenious Mr. Mitford's Hist. Greece, p. 346.

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on their cavalry, in which the Greeks (the Thessalians excepted) from the nature of their country were extremely deficient. The defensive armour of the Persian infantry was also inferior to the Grecian. "The Persians," says Herodotus *, "go to battle carrying bows and short spears, and wearing stockings and turbans; the Greeks carried long spears and swords, and wore greaves and helmets." The bravest of the Persian troops fought on horseback; but in all ages the long Grecian spear has proved the surest defence against the attack of cavalry, insomuch that even the Romans, in fighting against the Numidian horsemen, preferred the strength of the phalanx to the activity of the legion. The various nations which composed the Persian army, though not destitute of valour, or ignorant of military discipline, compared with the regularity of the Greek battalions, may be regarded as a promiscuous crowd, armed in each division with the peculiar weapons of their respective countries, and incapable of being united into any uniform system of military arrangement. The Greeks were not only superior to the Persians in their armour and military discipline; they possessed that enthusiasm and emulation which animate the bosoms of those who have armed in the cause of liberty, and are prepared not only to fight, but to die for their country.

The Persian generals, guided by Hippias, had landed their troops on the eastern coast of Attica, and encamped in the narrow plain of Marathon. Miltiades posted his army on the declivity of the hill above. His rear was defended by the mountain, which, verging round to meet the sea, likewise covered his right; his left was flanked by the marsh of Marathon. Inspecting the ground and the enemy,

* Lib. v. cap. 49.

Miltiades determined to attack. The narrow plain was favourable to that mode of engagement, in which the Greeks excelled, and for which their arms were peculiarly adapted. To form a line equal to that of the enemy, Miltiades extended his front by weakening his centre. By order of their general, the Athenian army rushed down the hill with fury, and advanced to the attack, running the whole way. This singular onset was derided by the Persians, and imputed to ignorance of military discipline; but the effect of the shock proved the wisdom with which it had been concerted. The Persian cavalry, formidable in champaign countries by their rapid evolutions, were incumbered in this confined plain by their own infantry, and prevented from engaging. The bravest of the Persian troops, posted in the centre, stood the impetuosity of the attack, broke the weak part of the Athenian line, and pursued it to a distance. After a fierce conflict, the Athenians routed and put to flight the two wings of the Persian army; then joining their divided forces, they attacked the conquering centre of the barbarians returning weary from the pursuit, and gave it a complete overthrow. The Persians fled to their ships. Seven of their galleys were taken. Five Athenian generals, and about two hundred citizens, perished in the engagement. The Persians lost six thousand of their bravest troops. Hippias, the banished king of Athens, was slain. After the battle, a soldier was sent from the field to announce the victory at Athens. Exhausted with fatigue and bleeding from his wounds, he had only time to cry out, "Rejoice, we are conquerors!" and immediately expired *.

After the defeat at Marathon, the Persian commander doubled the cape of Sunium, with the hopes

* Herodot. lib. vi. cap. 1, 12, 13, &c.

of surprizing the harbour of Athens, and taking the city by assault. Aware of the enemy's intention, Miltiades made a rapid march; and when the Persians arrived off the port Phalerus, they saw an Athenian army encamped on the hill above. The Persian fleet then sailed to the coast of Asia, carrying with them their Eretrian prisoners, who were conducted to Darius at Susa. The great king ordered them immediately to be released from their chains, and assigned them for their habitation a fertile district in the province of Cissia, about twenty-four miles from his capital. There the colony remained in the time of Herodotus, preserving their Grecian language and manners; and, after a revolution of six hundred years, were distinguished from the surrounding nations by certain marks of European extraction *.

When the day of the full-moon was over, the Lacedemonians began their march with two thousand men; and, having travelled a hundred and fifty miles in the space of three days, arrived in Attica. The battle was fought the preceding day; however, they went forward to Marathon, and having gazed in silence on the field, congratulated the Athenians on their success, and returned to their own country.

Monuments were raised to the memory of those who had fallen in the field; and their names, and the tribes to which they belonged, were recorded in marble. The valour of Miltiades too was rewarded. The battle of Marathon was painted; amid a group of figures, the person of Miltiades drew the eye in the attitude of giving orders at the head of the Athenian army. Athens produced great men, because she knew how to reward them.

* Philostrat. vit. Apollon.

The battle of Marathon has often deservedly filled the page of the historian. Never had so small a body of forces overcome so great an host. Their splendid achievements and extraordinary success inspired the Greeks with an enthusiasm of valour, and are considered by Plato as the source and original cause of their future conquests and victories. The terror of the Persian power, hitherto so formidable, was dissipated. The Greeks were taught, from success, to know their own strength, and to tremble no more at the name of an enemy whom they had conquered. On all following occasions of importance, the orators recalled the field of Marathon to the remembrance of their countrymen, and held up Miltiades and his victorious troops to view, in order to inspire them with a passion for glory, and the emulation of their ancestors.

Delivered from impending destruction by the victory at Marathon, the Athenians began to extend their views, and to meditate conquest. The islands in the Egean had submitted to the demands of Darius, and aided the cause of the Persians. Miltiades was sent with seventy ships to exact fines from them for their delinquency, and reduce them under the authority of the Athenian government. Paros resisted, and its principal town was besieged. On a false report of the arrival of the Persian fleet, Miltiades raised the siege, in which he had been dangerously wounded, and returned with his fleet to Athens, where an unsuccessful commander never found a welcome reception.

From the expulsion of Hippias, the Alcmæonidæ had governed Athens. The glory of Miltiades, by diminishing their consequence, excited their envy and opposition. He was accused by Xantippus, son-in-law of Megacles, the chief of the Alcmæonid party, of having raised the siege of Paros from the influence

influence of a Persian bribe. The hour of danger was past; and the services of Miltiades were no longer necessary to the safety of the commonwealth. Influenced by the ruling party, Athens forgot her deliverer. He was condemned in a fine of fifty talents *, which he was unable to discharge. His wounds began to fester; and the hero of Marathon died in prison.

CHAP. XV.

The second PERSIAN *War. Character of* THEMISTOCLES *and* ARISTIDES. *Battle of* THERMOPYLÆ.

AFTER the defeat of the Persian forces at Marathon, the attention of Darius was occupied with two important objects, that suspended his resentment against the Grecian Republics. Egypt revolted from his sway, and a dangerous competition, concerning the succession to the empire, took place between two of his sons. By his first marriage, with the daughter of Gobrias, three sons were born to him before his accession to the throne; and four by Atossa, the daughter of Cyrus, after his elevation to the royal dignity. In this contest, the eldest son of the King was preferred to the eldest son of Darius; and the right of succession was determined in favour of Xerxes. Darius died soon after this event.

In the second year of his reign, Xerxes marched an army against the Egyptians; and, having subdued these revolted subjects, committed the govern-

* About nine thousand four hundred pounds sterling.

ment of Egypt to his brother Achemenes, and returned in the latter end of the year to his palace at Susa.

Elated with his success against the Egyptians, he resumed the long-intended project of his father; and, prompted by resentment as well as ambition, determined to make war against the Greeks. The character of the Persians, for valour, was still respectable; the counsellors of a youthful monarch, descended from a line of conquerors, would be disposed to second the impressions of his lofty mind, to emulate the glory of his ancestors, and extend the boundaries of the empire.

Though the burning of Sardis, and the defeat at Marathon, might irritate the Persian pride; yet, to take vengeance on the Athenians was not the sole object of Xerxes: what Herodotus has suggested appears probable, that this ambitious sovereign might meditate the subjugation of all Europe, however little of it was known to him; and look to the western ocean as the termination of his career, and the boundary of his conquests *. Hence he entered into an alliance with the Carthaginians, at that time the most powerful people of the West, in which it was agreed, that while the great King was to invade Greece in person, with all the force of Asia, the Carthaginians, with three hundred thousand men, were to attack the colonies of Greek extraction in Italy and Sicily, and thus, on the ruins of the Grecian name, to lay the basis of universal empire.

Having thus armed the West under the command of Hamilcar, the Carthaginian general, and having assembled the East under his own banners, he set out from Susa in the fifth year of his reign, after having spent three years in making preparations throughout all the provinces of his wide-extended empire.

* Herodot. lib. vii. cap. 8.

As maritime states could not be subdued, or retained in subjection, without a naval power, he had fitted out an armament at sea, adequate to the greatness of his undertaking. Twelve hundred and seven galleys of war, carrying, at a medium, two hundred seamen, and thirty Persians, or Sacians, who served as marines, were furnished by the Egyptians, Phenicians, Syrians, and the nations of Lower Asia. Three thousand transports of various dimensions, containing, at an average, a crew of eighty men, attended the fleet. The whole amounted, according to Herodotus *, to about four thousand two hundred ships, and above five hundred thousand men. To render navigation secure from Asia to Europe, and along the coasts of Thrace, Macedon, and Thessaly, to the centre of the Grecian states, a work of prodigious labour and difficulty was undertaken. Orders were given to dig a canal, in which two galleys might sail abreast, across the isthmus which joins Athos to the continent of Thrace †. Navigation, even at present, is dangerous in the Ægean sea; the frequent shipwrecks that had happened in this sea, and the recent disasters which befel Mardonius, in attempting to double the Cape of the Peninsula, probably suggested to Xerxes a magnificent undertaking, which, perhaps, originated more from policy than ostentation. The neck of land was only half a league broad; and a monarch, who commanded the labour of millions, could easily have accomplished a work of greater difficulty.

When the levies for the land-army were completed, Xerxes came in person to take the command, and marched immediately to Sardis, where he passed the winter. To transport his forces with celerity,

* Herodot. lib. 7, cap. 87.
† Ibid. cap. 21.

from Asia to Europe, he ordered two bridges of boats to be raised on a strait of the Hellespont, about seven furlongs in breadth. The bridges were constructed, one to resist the current, which is always strong from the Propontis, the other to withstand the winds, which are often violent from the Ægean sea. This double range of boats was fixed by strong anchors on both sides on the opposite shores; large beams were driven into the earth, to which vast cables were fastened, that reached over the whole extent of the vessels from one side of the strait to the other. The decks were strewed with trees and planks, and the whole covered with earth, to serve as a solid bottom. Rails or battlements of wicker-work were raised on the sides, to remove the apprehension of danger, and prevent the impetuosity of the horses from attempting the sea. When the whole was finished, a time was fixed for crossing the Hellespont upon this singular bridge; and, in the space of seven days and nights, the army passed, in uninterrupted succession, from Abydos in Asia to Sestus in Europe.

Xerxes then directed his march across the Thracian Chersonesus, and arriving at Doriscus, situated at the mouth of the Hebrus in Thrace, he encamped his army; and, having given orders for his fleet to follow him along the shore, he paused to review his forces by sea and land.

When we consider the multitudes which the monarchs of the East have been accustomed to bring into the field, beside the regular troops, and reflect on the immense preparations that were made for this war, we may conceive that a prodigious army would pass in review on this occasion. At the same time the exaggerated account of Herodotus shocks credibility. He estimates the land-forces, assembled at Doriscus, to have amounted to one million eigh hundred thousand fighting men; and, by the recruits

cruits that joined them on the march to Thermopylæ, to have increased to two million one hundred thousand. He computes the fleet to have contained five hundred and forty thousand * sailors and marines, which, added to the land-army, make two million six hundred and forty thousand. To these he subjoins a gross computation of servants, sutlers, and other military followers, to nearly an equal amount; and thus calculates the force of Xerxes at five million two hundred and eighty-three thousand two hundred and twenty men; besides a numberless multitude of women, eunuchs, and slaves.

No antient author has adopted this extravagant account; and even his own countrymen refused to give it credit. Isocrates, Ctesias, and Diodorus Siculus, state the military force at seven or eight hundred thousand. The vanity of the Greeks led them to exaggerate the strength, and magnify the numbers of an enemy whom they had conquered

Early in the spring Xerxes sent deputies to the several Grecian states, to require the delivery of earth and water, as a mark of submission. He did not observe the same ceremony with regard to the Athenians and Spartans, as they had treated with inhuman cruelty, and in contradiction to the laws of war even among barbarous nations, the ambassadors entrusted with a similar commission by Darius his father. Many of the inferior commonwealths, intimidated by the greatness of the Persian name, and discerning no bond of union among the Grecian powers, and no measures concerted in common for the general defence of the country, made the required

* In an inscription placed on the monument erected to the memory of the Greeks who fell at the battle of Thermopylæ, it is mentioned, that the Spartans had fought against three million of men; an exaggeration which is contradicted by the historian who records it.

acknow-

acknowledgment to the ambassadors, and delivered earth and water as tokens of submission. Nor will this appear surprizing, when we consider the real history of Greece, and the state of parties at that time.

It was an opinion then generally entertained, that the power and forces of Persia were not to be resisted. The Grecian colonies in Asia Minor, superior to the parent country in opulence and population, had attempted in vain to defend themselves against Crœsus, a prince of far inferior power; and, when they were subjected to the mildness of his government, they gained an accession of happiness by their submission. But now when that extensive empire, which had not only inclosed within its boundaries the antient kingdom of Lydia, with its tributary states, but had already made considerable advances into Europe; and which to a land-army, numerous beyond conception, added the greatest naval force that was ever known in the world; how was it to be opposed by a few inconsiderable states, whose territories, if subdued, would hardly be distinguished in the map of the Persian empire! Hence, from apprehensions for their own security, many of their inferior republics endeavoured to conciliate favour by an early submission to the great King, and acknowledged that submission by the delivery of earth and water *. The factions which prevailed in the Grecian commonwealths, tended farther to prevent their confederacy in the common cause. The insidious policy and domineering ambition of the Lacedemonians, had become odious to the neighbouring states, many of whom adopted the sentiments of the Argians, "That the Spartan arrogance was become "intolerable; and that they would rather be com-

* Herodot. lib. vii. cap. 138.

"manded

"manded by the Barbarians, than subject to Lacedemon *."

It was to the Athenians chiefly that Greece was indebted for its preservation on this critical occasion; their particular situation determined them to the part which they performed. The burning of Sardis during the Ionian rebellion; their treatment of the Persian heralds, so contrary to the law of nations; and, above all, their recent and celebrated victory at Marathon, had rendered them so obnoxious to the Persian despot, that they could hope for no terms in submission, but the most abject slavery or inevitable destruction.

Independent of these circumstances, their spirit was too much elated by their past successes to solicit, or even to tolerate, a foreign yoke. The victory at Marathon had dissipated their terror of the Medes, taught them to confide in their own courage, and inspired them with enthusiasm and the love of glory. Hence, says Herodotus, forming a plan for the general liberty of Greece, they roused to energy all the states which were undecided in the cause, and, next, under the gods, repelled the Persian invasion. Eventful and alarming periods call forth extraordinary abilities, and great occasions produce great men. Two illustrious Athenians, Aristides and Themistocles, now attracted the expectations of their countrymen, whose subsequent rank in history merits an intimate knowledge of their characters.

Aristides was descended from a family of the highest class. An admirer of the Spartan constitution, he had carefully studied the laws of Lycurgus; and hence, both from birth and education, became attached to the Aristocratical party at Athens. Justice was the prevailing feature in his

* Herodot. lib. vii. cap. 148.

character, and the rule of his conduct both in public and in private life. Delicately disinterested, he refused to accept of employments from the recommendation of his friends, lest it should lay him under a dangerous obligation. Discerning the merit of others, but unconscious of his own; it was he who first resigned his day of command to Miltiades, in the former war. Contented with a small fortune, he rejected the offers of his friends; and, from his simple manner of life, might have been a citizen of Sparta. Indifferent about popularity, he acquired real fame. When a play of Eschylus was performing, and the actor was repeating a verse which describes the character of Amphiaraus, "He does "not desire to appear a virtuous man, but to be so," the whole audience turned their eyes to Aristides.

Themistocles was a Plebeian by birth. Born with great abilities, ambition was his ruling passion. In early youth he shewed such symptoms of a bold and fiery, and at the same time shrewd disposition, that his master predicted he would either be a blessing or a curse to his country. Humble from ambition, he courted the multitude; because he knew it was only by them he could rise. Affable and complaisant, he was always ready to oblige; he knew all the citizens by name; and, solicitous to procure friends, paid little regard to the means by which they were acquired or retained. But if his moral qualities were doubtful, his political character was unrivalled; and in this regard, as Thucydides, a good judge of human nature, has observed, no person was more worthy the admiration of posterity. He possessed that natural sagacity, the rarest and happiest talent for the management of public affairs, which, resembling the perceptions of sense more than the operations of intellect, seizes its object by intuition, and follows it with the certainty of instinct.

These

These two characters stood at the head of the different parties in the city. From their childhood they had been at variance, even in their sports; a proof that their contrariety of opinion proceeded from a discordance of nature. Themistocles was the bolder genius; Aristides the gentler spirit. Forming great views, Themistocles looked to the end; conceiving humble intentions, Aristides regarded the means. The former was the greater statesman; the latter, the better man.

The battle of Marathon had suggested a bold enterprise to the active mind of Themistocles. Revolving his scheme, he roamed the streets at night, and told those he met, that the trophy of Miltiades would not allow him to rest: while the Athenians, after their victory over the Persians, abandoned themselves to joy, or renewed their old dissensions. Themistocles considered that success as the prognostic of a coming storm, and repeated daily in the ears of his countrymen, that the Persian war, so far from being ended, was but just begun. But before he made preparations for a danger that was distant, he thought it necessary to rid himself of a rival, who was ready on all occasions to thwart his views.

The Ostracism had been already introduced into the Athenian state, though by whom, or in what period, is unknown; by this, men eminent to such a degree as to threaten the state with danger, were banished for ten years. This exile was not a punishment for a crime, but a kind of honourable retirement, and employed as a curb to the growing power of a dangerous citizen. Something similar prevailed in many of the antient republics, and perhaps was necessary in small states, where equality prevailed; though, among the Athenians in particular, it was frequently abused. The method of proceeding was this: The citizens took shells, and, having written upon

upon them the name of the person they wished to banish, carried them to the place appointed by law: then the magistrates numbered the shells; if they amounted to six thousand, the sentence of exile took place, leaving, however, to the banished person the disposal of his estate.

It will appear surprizing, that Themistocles could raise the popular resentment against a man so respectable and so amiable as Aristides; he effected it, however, by making that very title which attested his virtue, his accusation. He whispered about, that Aristides, having assumed the name of Just, and frequently acting as judge between contending parties, had insensibly established a monarchy, though without the title; and erected a throne, though without pomp or guards. "For "what constitutes a tyrant," said he, "but giving "laws?" On a sudden, and when it was least expected, the citizens and countrymen flocked to the forum, and demanded the Ostracism. A peasant who could not write, and knew not this great man, applied to him to write the name of Aristides upon his shell. "What injury has that man done to you?" said the virtuous citizen of Athens. "None at all," replied the rustic, "only I am weary of hearing him every where called the Just." Aristides wrote his own name upon the shell, and delivered it to the peasant. The six thousand suffrages were given: he received his sentence with magnanimity; and, departing from the city, besought the gods, that the Athenians, might never see the day which should force them to remember Aristides.

This unworthy stratagem would have left an indelible stain upon the memory of Themistocles, if it had not been effaced by his subsequent splendid and meritorious services. Delivered now from a rival, who always opposed, and often obstructed his

his designs, he applied to his grand project, putting his country in a state of preparation for a war with Persia, which he beheld at no great distance. He saw the weakness, and examined the resources, of Athens. Happily situated for a marine, their fleet was inferior to that of the Æginetans, their neighbours. By becoming a maritime power, Athens would increase her wealth and extend her dominion.

Egina was a little island or rock, situated in the Saronic Gulph, which divides the territories of Attica from the northern shores of Peloponnesus. The rocky and barren soil had early compelled the inhabitants to seek sustenance from the watery element; the bark was soon improved into the vessel; the troop of fishermen became a nation of merchants; and their naval experience and power, during the usurpation at Athens, had arrogated the dominion of the seas.

On the invasion of Greece, under Datis, the Æginetans were the first who acknowledged subjection to the Persian King from enmity to the Athenians, their antient rivals in trade, and now become too powerful for them to contend with, unless aided by such a strong alliance as that period presented.

The conduct of the Æginetans, in delivering earth and water to the Persian heralds, renewed the antient hostilities between them and the Athenians. This island being engaged in a subordinate alliance with Sparta, it was thought proper to demand, at the hand of the sovereign state, chastisement of that people who had deserted the cause of Greece and joined the common enemy. The Spartans listened to the remonstrance, and taking ten of the principal citizens from Ægina, sent them hostages to Athens, as security for the fidelity of their countrymen. This mutual animosity soon produced a naval war, which was carried on for some time with various success,

but

but with uniform animosity and exertion. These contests with Ægina merit attention, as they mark the causes and the progress of the Athenian greatness at sea, and account for those "*wooden walls*," which rose up so suddenly the safeguard and bulwark of Greece. The expedition to the coast of Ionia, and the siege of Sardis, had awakened the spirit, and improved the means of naval armaments; and the Æginetan war had taught the ship-builder and engineer the advantages of their art, and had given the mariner the courage and dexterity of habit.

Herodotus scruples not to affirm, that Greece owed its preservation to this war, as it first obliged the Athenians to raise a marine*.

The Athenians possessed a rich silver mine at Mount Larium, a part of Attica. As the treasury was rich, it had been determined, in the true spirit of republican rapacity, that the revenue arising from the mine should be appropriated to relieve the wants of the citizens, or be dissipated in the public amusements. While the minds of the people were agitated with the strongest resentment against the Æginetans, Themistocles proposed, that this annual revenue should be destined to the purpose of building ships of war, by which they might destroy the fleets of their antient rivals and enemies. The proposal was adopted, and two hundred galleys were soon equipped, of a superior size and construction to any hitherto known in Greece †.

While the army of Xerxes was approaching, those republics which had determined to defend their liberties to the last, concerted measures for forming a common confederacy among all the Gre-

* Lib. vii. cap. 144.

† Plato de Legib. lib. 3.

cian

cian states. Deputies were sent from the isthmus of Corinth, consisting of representatives from Athens and Lacedæmon, and from several states of Peloponnesus. Having agreed to suspend their antient quarrels and private animosities, they sent ambassadors to Argos, to Sicily, and to the Islands of Corcyra and Crete, to desire succours, and conclude a league against the common enemy. The inhabitants of Argos refused to join the confederacy, upon the pretence that they could not be admitted to an equal share of the command. Gelo, king of Syracuse, promised to assist them with a numerous army and a powerful fleet, on condition that they would make him generalissimo of all their forces by sea and land. National pride and republican jealousy prevented them from complying with his requisition; while in the mean time, the approach of three hundred thousand Carthaginians, commanded by Hamilcar, rendered his whole force necessary to defend Sicily. Most of the other states submitted to Xerxes. Thespia and Platea alone took part with the Athenians and Spartans.

While the deputies were sitting at Corinth, and consulting about the conduct of the war, intelligence was brought from Thessaly, that the Persian army had crossed the Hellespont, and was directing its march toward that frontier. As the Thessalians had entered with alacrity and zeal into the confederacy, they expected that an immediate and effectual force would be assembled to guard the narrow passes which lead into their country. The celebrated valley of Tempe, between the mountains of Olympus and Ossa, is the only passage from Lower Macedonia into Thessaly. The Thessalians supposed that the enemy would endeavour to penetrate into their country by this defile. Accordingly their ambassadors entreated and urged the confederated Greeks to send

a power-

a powerful army from the southern states, to assist them in defending that important pass. Their remonstrance, delivered with energy, animated the hesitating councils of the allied Greeks. A body of ten thousand foot embarked under the command of Themistocles the Athenian, and Evœnetus a Spartan; and sailing through the Euripus, marched across the country, and occupied the valley of Tempe. As the Thessalians excelled in cavalry, their horse, joined to the infantry sent from the other states of Greece, were sufficient to defend that inlet against the most numerous forces.

The Grecian army had not been long in this situation, when a messenger from Alexander, son of Amintas, tributary prince of Macedon, announced to them, that the Persian army, on its way to attack them, was immense and irresistible; that there was another passage into Thessaly, through Upper Macedonia; and advising them to make a timely retreat, to avoid being overwhelmed by the myriads of Asia. Conscious that their strength was insufficient to defend both passes, Themistocles and Evœnetus reimbarked their troops, and returned to the isthmus of Corinth. Thus forsaken, and thinking themselves betrayed, by their allies, the Thessalians submitted to the Persian King, and entered with zeal into his service.

The Grecian confederacy, which remained to resist the whole force of the Persian empire, now consisted of a few little states, whose united territories did not equal single provinces in the kingdoms of modern Europe; neither was there among these any cordial unanimity, nor any general concert for employing their forces in one direction with vigour and effect. The critical situation of their affairs struck terror into the respective states. The oracles, which had such a mighty influence in the antient world,

world, were ambiguous and alarming. They denounced to the Lacedæmonians, that "Sparta or its King must fall." The response to the Athenians was, "to seek refuge within their wooden walls." While different opinions were given concerning the interpretation of the oracle, Themistocles (by whom it had probably been suggested) affirmed, "that their wooden walls were their fleet, to which the god desired them to trust for protection." This interpretation, supported by his eloquence and authority, was, at last, adopted, although Epicides, a presumptuous and popular demagogue, opposed it with all his influence; and, seeking this occasion to blacken the character, and frustrate the expectations of Themistocles, insisted that he himself should be appointed to the chief command of the army. The sagacious Themistocles, who knew the character of his opponent, silenced his opposition by a seasonable bribe, and was unanimously chosen general. The Athenian galleys, being joined with those of Corinth, Eubœa, Ægina, and the maritime states of Peloponnesus, composed a fleet of three hundred sail. They directed their course to the strait, which separates the coast of Eubœa from that of Thessaly; and, taking their station at the promontory of Artemisium, waited for the arrival of the Persian fleet. After having completely manned the fleet, the confederates were able, exclusive of their slaves, to muster an army of sixty thousand men. The first step taken by the allies was to send Leonidas, at the head of ten thousand men, to take possession of the defile of Thermopylæ, situated at the foot of Mount Oeta, between Thessaly and Phocis, the only pass by which the Persian army could penetrate into Achaia. This pass obtained its name from the adjacent hot springs, and was considered as the gate or opening into Greece. Near

 the

the plain of the city Trachis, the passage was fifty feet broad; but towards the north of Thermopylæ the mountains so closed, and towards the south so pressed upon the sea, as not to admit two carriages to pass abreast. No situation could be better adapted than this celebrated spot for the small band of heroic Greeks to withstand the multiplying myriads of Persia. It had this further and singular advantage, that the station of the Grecian fleet at Artemisium was only fifteen miles distant.

Xerxes, after marching through Thrace and Macedonia, came at last to the pass of Thermopylæ, guarded by the Grecian troops. These amounted to eleven thousand men, four thousand of whom were more immediately destined to defend the passage. Every man of that number was determined to conquer or to die.

The Persian monarch, meeting only with submission in his long march through Asia and Europe, was struck with astonishment when he found what he looked upon as an inconsiderable province, meditated resistance, and that a handful of Greeks dared to dispute his entrance into their country. Being informed by Demaratus that a small number of men might, at this pass, suspend the motion of all his army, he sent messengers to Leonidas, and the leaders of the Greeks, desiring them to deliver up their arms. They answered in the spirit and the style of Spartans, "Come and take them." The messengers then offered them vast possessions in land, on condition of their entering into an alliance with the Great King; but they replied, "That it was the custom of their commonwealth to conquer lands by valour, not to acquire them by treachery." Excepting these laconic answers, they paid no attention to the Persians, but continued their gymnastic exercises, entertained themselves with musick and

and discourse, or adjusted their long hair, according to their custom when they engaged in war. The messengers, on their return to the Persian camp, described what they had seen and heard, and related the unexpected event of their commission. It was beyond the conception of Xerxes, and therefore he could not believe that the Grecians were come to Thermopylæ for the sole end of dying for their country. Accordingly he waited four days, expecting that they would retreat from his irresistible army; but as they remained unshaken and determined, he prepared to chastise their insolence and obstinacy.

On the fifth day, he gave orders to the Medes and Cessians of his army to attack the Greeks under Leonidas, and bring them alive into his presence. These troops advanced with ardour to the engagement, but were soon repulsed with great slaughter, and shewed, says Herodotus, that Xerxes had a great many attendants, but few soldiers. The Sacæ, armed with hatchets, next advanced, but were compelled to retreat with equal disgrace. At last the Persian guards, called the *immortal band*, were sent under the command of Hydarnes to finish the contest; but their numbers were useless on ground so confined, and their short weapons were insufficient when opposed to the Grecian spear. Their attacks, however, were often renewed, and varied in every direction. Numbers fell, but no impression was made on the firm battalions of the Greeks. The Great King, who beheld the battle from an eminence, is said to have started thrice in anxious emotion from his throne, and fearing lest the flower of his army should be cut off, ordered them to be recalled from the scene of action; yet hoping, from the small numbers of the Greeks, that their strength or courage would be exhausted by the fatigue of

incessant

incessant attacks, he ventured next day to renew the engagement. But the little army of Leonidas still kept their ground; and the Persians, after ineffectual endeavours to force their way through the defile, were compelled to retire with disappointment and disgrace.

While Xerxes, anxious and perplexed, knew not what resolution to take, Epialtes, an inhabitant of the country, induced by the hopes of reward, brought information of another pass over the mountains of Oeta, several miles westward of that defended by Leonidas. Along this path, formerly frequented by the Thessalians, but now unknown, except among the neighbouring inhabitants, he proposed to conduct a detachment of twenty thousand Persians, who might attack the enemy in the rear, while the main body assailed them in front.

This plan was immediately adopted by the Persian generals. Towards the close of the seventh day after the arrival of Xerxes at Thermopylæ, twenty thousand chosen men marched from the camp, under the command of Hydarnes. They advanced all night without interruption, and arrived by daybreak near the summit of the hill, where a guard of a thousand Phocians had been sent by Leonidas to defend this important, though, as he thought, unknown pass. A forest of oaks, with which the mountain was covered, had concealed the approach of the enemy.

The Phocians, who had neglected the necessary precaution of advanced guards, were first alarmed by the noise of a multitude of men treading among the fallen leaves; which, from the serenity of the atmosphere, they heard at some distance.

Having discovered their danger, they immediately ran to arms; but in the moment of surprise, sup-

posing themselves the ultimate objects of the attack, they abandoned the pass which they had been sent to guard, and retreated to a higher part of the mountain, to gain more advantageous ground for defence. But as the object of the detachment was not to cut off this inconsiderable party, the prudent Hydarnes left them to enjoy their place of safety, and immediately seizing the passage, descended the mountain with celerity, to carry into execution the object of his expedition.

Early in the morning, information was brought by the scouts of the army, that the Persians had passed the Phocian guard, and were descending towards the plain. Leonidas called a council of war to deliberate on this important and alarming information. All, except the Spartans, gave it as their opinion, that it was necessary to abandon a post which they could no longer maintain, and that, as their exertions in the present situation would be fruitless, it was prudent to reserve themselves for a more advantageous occasion of serving their country. The debate ended in a general resolution to retreat with speed to their respective cities, the Lacedæmonians, Thespians, and Bœotians only remaining. The Thespians alone voluntarily continued with Leonidas. Their republic was united in the strictest alliance with Sparta, by which they had been often defended against the tyranny of the Thebans. The Bœotians were detained by the express desire of Leonidas, who kept them as hostages rather than auxiliaries, on account of the known disaffection of their country to the Grecian cause. These, with three hundred Spartans, all of them chosen men, and celebrated for valour, composed the army of Leonidas.

The Spartan king, with his little band of heroic

and self-devoted followers, resolved on this occasion to exhibit to the world a memorable example of obedience to the laws of Lycurgus, which prohibited, on whatever occasion, to desert their post, or to fly from an enemy. The subjects of other states might follow the dictates of prudence or expediency; but the Spartans could only hear and obey the voice of glory, and the call of their country.

Placed in the post of honour by the general consent of Greece, they chose rather to die than desert that station, and they determined therefore, though at the expence of their lives, to confirm the preeminence of Sparta, to earn immortal fame, and to give an example of patriotism to the last ages of Greece. Animated by the example of their leader, each Lacedæmonian and Thespian under his command devoted himself to death; but resolved to die in such a manner as should be glorious to himself, and beneficial to his country. When he ordered them to "prepare the last meal of their lives, and to dine like men, who at night should sup with their fathers," they sent up a shout of joy, as if they had been invited to a banquet.

When Hydarnes, with his detachment of twenty thousand men, had nearly approached to the rear of the Greeks, a chosen band of Persians advanced to the assault in front. To guard the defile, when they must inevitably be surrounded, was no longer an object to Leonidas, and his attendants; but to choose the spot, where, in sacrificing themselves they might make the greatest havoc among the enemy.

Conscious of certain death, it was now time to prepare for the last effort of generous despair. Advancing to the widest part of the valley, they attacked the Persians with the most impetuous valour,

spread

spread a scene of carnage on all sides, and in the confusion that ensued, many of the undisciplined barbarians were driven into the sea, while numbers were trodden to death by their fellow-soldiers. Leonidas fell early in the engagement, at the head of his heroic Spartans. The conflict however was continued favourably for the Greeks, till Hydarnes attacked their rear. Collected in themselves, though retiring to return no more, they took post behind the wall of Thermopylæ. The Thebans took this opportunity of expressing their early attachment to the Persians, and with outstretched arms begged mercy of the conquerors. Many of them were killed in the act of surrendering themselves; the remainder, being made prisoners, survived only to infamy. The Lacedæmonians and Thespians continued to fight with all the fury of despair, till the wall was broken down and the enemy entered by the breaches. It was no longer possible to resist the weapons of surrounding multitudes; this undaunted band perished to the last man, overwhelmed rather than conquered by the Persian arms.

To the memory of those brave defenders of Greece, a magnificent monument was afterwards erected on the spot where they fell, bearing two inscriptions; one in honour of all those who had fallen on that occasion, importing, that a thousand Greeks had resisted the progress of the Persian army, consisting of millions. The other, to the memory of Leonidas and his three hundred Spartans, expressed in a few simple words by the poet Simonides: "*Tell, stranger, at Sparta, that you wept over the ashes of the three hundred, who devoted themselv s to death in obedience to the laws of their country.*"

Twenty thousand Persians fell in this engagement, and among the rest the two brothers of Xerxes.

 The

The action at Thermopylæ had serious and decisive effects both upon the Persians and the Greeks. It convinced the Persians of the high spirit, and desperate valour of that people with whom they were to engage, and taught them at what a price victory was to be obtained. The conduct of the Greeks on this occasion merits our highest praise. When monarchy has become the general government of Europe; when states are composed of subjects, not of citizens, and war is carried on by mercenary troops, it is difficult for us to conceive the feelings of free men when their country was in danger, and their liberty at stake. Even the commonwealths which are under our inspection, composed of merchants and manufacturers accustomed to the functions of civil life, give us but an imperfect idea of the martial republics of antiquity, and seldom produce examples of those prodigies of valour which originate from enthusiasm and despair. The day of Thermopylæ announced the last resolution of the Athenians and Spartans, to die free, rather than to live slaves; and taught the Great King, that with all the millions of the East, it might be possible to exterminate the Greeks, but it was impossible to subdue them.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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